

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

Overview

The body of 1 John is organized as three panels, each with the signs of righteousness, love, and belief (Table 1). The first two panels treat the signs in this order. In the third, love comes first, then righteousness, and then belief. We also see increased integration among the signs as suggested in 3:18, 23.

Figure 1 shows the order of the signs in each panel, and the relative amount of space devoted to each sign in each panel. Here we apply the law of proportion: the amount of space a writer devotes to a topic indicates the emphasis he is placing on it. We can make two observations.

First, John devotes more space overall to Love (about 45% by words) than to Righteousness (24%) or Belief (31%). It occupies the most space in each panel. This is clearly the dominant theme in his thought.

Second, in each of the first two panels, he highlights one of the other two signs.

In the first panel, the sign of belief occupies almost as much space (42%) as the sign of love (45%), for in departing from the truth, the false teachers had also departed from the fellowship. Doctrinal error not only propagates falsehood, but also reveals lack of love among the believers.

1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

In the second panel, the dominant theme (after love, 43%) is righteousness (34%), defined in terms of our family relation to God, which leads naturally to loving our brethren, and he emphasizes the Lord's instruction in the upper room,

1Jn 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

Love is our Savior's command, and if we are to be righteous, we will love one another.

Love continues to dominate in the third panel.

4:7-18, Love

The noun (ἀγάπη *agapē* G26) and verb (ἀγαπάω *agapaō* G25) appear in all three love sections (Figure 2, chart), but are much more common in this third love section than previously. In addition, it spills out of the love section into the righteousness section, as we will see shortly.

	Righteousness	Love	Belief
2:3-28	2:3-6	2:7-17	2:18-28
2:29-4:6	2:29-3:10	3:11-24	4:1-6
4:7-5:12	4:19-5:4	4:7-18	5:5-12

Table 1: The three signs of eternal life

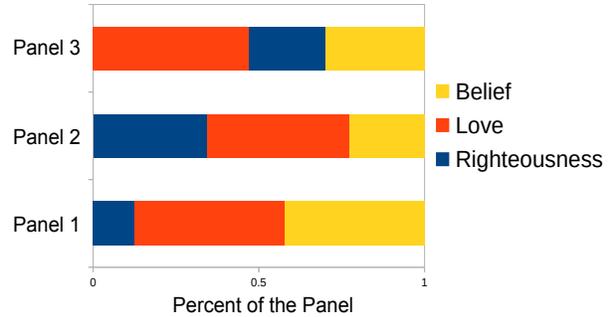


Figure 1: Order and Emphasis of the Signs in Each Panel

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This love section has something that the previous two do not. The words “son” (υἱός *huios* G5207) (which 1 John uses only for the Lord Jesus, never for us) and “Christ” are characteristic of the three belief sections, marking the distinctive truth (the joint humanity and deity of the Lord Jesus) that the false teachers are denying, but they also appear at the start of the third love section, and highlight a new perspective on love:

- The first love section, 2:7-17 goes back to the Lord’s command in the upper room, “love one another.” Love there is a sign of walking in the light, and must not be shared with the world.
- In 3:11-24, love #2, our position as children of God in the righteousness section requires us to consider other believers as brethren.
- Here, the Son displays God’s love by coming as our redeemer.

This new focus becomes clear if we observe the objects of the verb “love” throughout the book (Figure 3, see note). In the first and second love sections, we are exhorted to love one another (red dots), but now for the first time in the epistle (blue dots), we read that God loved us in sending his Son to redeem us (4:9-11).

This definition of love motivates the use of the word in the third righteousness section: we love him (green dots), because he first loved us, and if we love him, we will keep his commandments.

The vocatives “beloved” at 4:7 and 11, each exhorting us to love one another, suggest a division of the section (Figure 4, chart). Both sections describes love as an intrinsic characteristic of God (“God is love,” 4:8, 16), demonstrated in the sending of his Son for us. In the first panel, our love for each other, like our righteousness in the second panel, results from our being born of God (4:7). In the second section, it results from our dwelling (abiding) in God. The last two verses, relating love to fear and judgment, form an assurance section, like those in the first two love sections.

7-10, Love from our New Birth

7a, Introductory Exhortation

1Jn 4:7 Beloved,—This is the third time we encounter this vocative (after 3:2, 21). It was motivated by God’s love for us (chart):

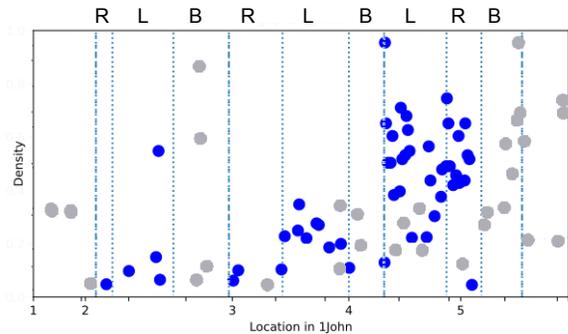


Figure 2: Love (noun and verb) (blue), Son (of God) or Christ (grey)

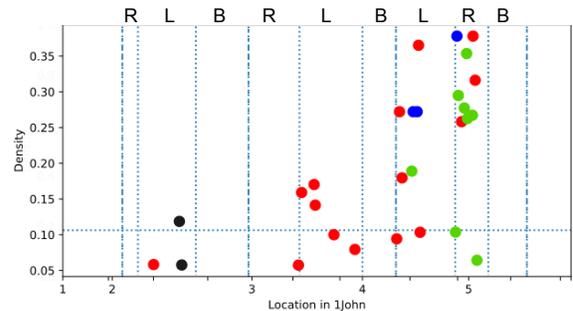


Figure 3: The verb “to love” (ἀγαπάω *agapaō* G25) in 1 John. Color indicates subject and object: we love one another (red), we love the world (black), God loves us (blue), we love God (green)

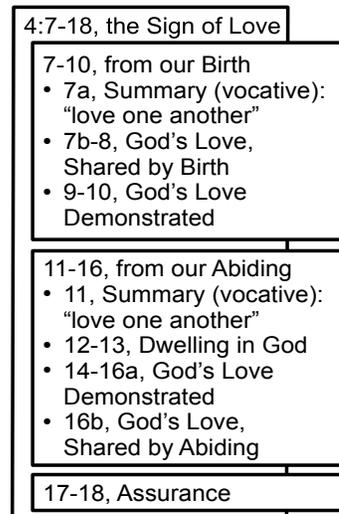


Figure 4: Structure of the Third Love Section

1Jn 3:1 Behold, what manner of **love the Father hath bestowed upon us**, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 **Beloved**, now are we the sons of God, ...

“Beloved” reminds them, not just of John’s love for them, but that they are beloved of God. This is the theme he emphasizes in this section.

let us love one another:—Here is the main theme of the section, repeated in v. 11.

7b-8, Definition and Sharing: God is Love, so his Children will Love

In vv. 7-10, the motive for this exhortation is the nature of God, and our relation to him. The logic is parallel to that at the start of the second righteousness section,

1Jn 2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

There, since the Father is righteous, the children will be righteous. Here, since God is love, the children will love.

He repeats the argument twice, in chiastic order, and negating the second panel (Table 2). Logically, this double statement constitutes a formal definition of the equality of the set of people who love, and the set of people who are born of God (Figure 5).¹ You cannot claim to be born of God, and fail to love; nor can you truly love, unless you are born of God.

	7b		8
Nature of God	Love is of God, ...	↕	... for God is love
Conduct of his Children	... and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God		He that loveth not knoweth not God; ...

Table 2: Chiasm in 4:7b-8

for love is of God;—The first statement of the nature of God is that love originates in him.

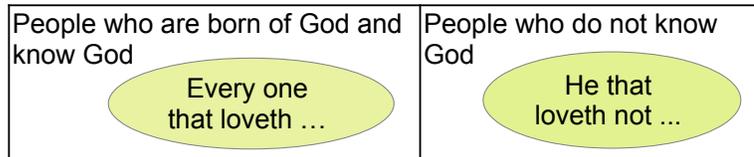


Figure 5: Set Equality: $(A \subseteq B) \wedge (A' \subseteq B') \rightarrow A \equiv B$

and every one that loveth is born

of God,—This is the counterpart of 2:29, “every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” The set of people who love (*A* in the caption to Figure 5) is a subset of the set of people who are born of God (*B* in the caption).

and knoweth God.—This is not an additional condition, but an explanation of being born of God (see note). The notion of knowing God pervades 1 John (chart):

1John 2:3 And hereby we do know that **we know him**, if we keep his commandments.

1John 2:13 ... I write unto you, little children, because **ye have known the Father**.

1John 4:6 We are of God: **he that knoweth God** heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

This characterization of God’s people comes from our Lord’s words to his Father in John 17,

¹ In discussing the second instance of the sign of righteousness (2:29-3:10), we saw a related argument, from the axiom of extensionality $((A \subseteq B) \wedge (B \subseteq A) \rightarrow A \equiv B)$, from the conjunction of 2:29 and 3:9. The logic of 4:7b-8 is seen earlier in 2:3-4. John has an affinity for double statements that logically entail the identity of two sets of people.

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John 17:3 And this is life eternal, **that they might know thee** the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

John's objective in this epistle is to help people know that they have eternal life (5:13), that is, that they know God.

4:7 constrains what truly constitutes love. Many unbelievers try to do things that benefit others, and call this "love." But people act in "loving ways" for many motives, including having other people think well of them. These do not count as love in the sense that John uses the word. He is describing the character of self-sacrificing love that can only originate in God.

8 He that loveth not knoweth not God;—The logical inverse of the first statement ensures the identity of the two categories.

for God is love.²—The close of the chiasm is even stronger than the opening. True love is not just from God. God himself is love. This claim recurs at the end of this section, in 4:16.

The statement that God is love is the second identifying characteristic of God we have seen in 1 John.³ In 1:5, we read (chart),

1Jn 1:5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that **God is light**, and in him is no darkness at all.

God as light is the all-searching judge of men's hearts. No sin escapes his notice. But God as love deals in compassion and grace with us. These are the two poles of Ex 34:6 and 7b,

Exo 34:6 The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, [God is love]

forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,

and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation. [God is light]

These two characteristics of God are in tension (chart). His loves move him to receive us, but his holiness demands judgment on our sin. The sons of Korah recognized the challenge:

Psa 85:10 **Mercy** and **truth** are met together; **righteousness** and **peace** have kissed each other.

How can God's holiness and love, his truth and his mercy, his righteousness and peace be reconciled? The answer is in the clause translated "forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." The verb is literally "bearing." In the OT, four entities are said to bear sin (chart):⁴

1. The sinner "bears his sin," meaning that he is guilty and must suffer the consequences, as in Lev 5:17 and 20:17.
2. The sacrifice "bears sin" as the substitute for the sinner, as in Lev 16:21-22.
3. The priest "bears sin" in the ritual of the sin offering, Lev 10:17.

2 ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν. Note SPV order.

3 Some (e.g., Marshall) note "God is Spirit" (4:24) as a third Johannine identity but the word order is different, πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, PS with no verb, a construction that emphasizes the quality of God rather than his identity. A closer parallel is John 3:33, "God is true," ὁ θεὸς ἀληθὴς ἐστίν, using the same SPV syntax as 1:5 and 4:8.

4 For full exposition of Ex 34:6-7 in its broader context, see <https://cyber-chapel.org/blog/moses-learns-the-names-of-god/>.

4. Remarkably, as in Exod 34:7 and elsewhere, God bears his people's sin. The other three uses make clear that this requires him to take the guilt and the penalty upon himself.

The Son of God fulfilled this promise on the cross:

Isa 53:11 ... by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall **bear their iniquities**.

Heb 9:28 So Christ was once offered to **bear the sins** of many;

1Pe 2:24 Who his own self **bare our sins** in his own body on the tree, ...

Note the importance of the doctrinal detail in the belief sections. God promised that he would bear our sin, and the man Jesus could fulfill that promise only because he is Christ the Lord.

9-10, Demonstration: The Father's Loving Gift of His Son

4:9 makes three points that 4:10 will repeat: God's love, the gift of his Son, and our salvation.

9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us,—John has asserted that God is love. In itself, this is an abstract claim. God validates it with a practical demonstration: sending his Son.⁵

because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world,—Note each phrase.

- *God sent*: In keeping with the promise of Exod 34:7b, God takes the initiative. Salvation is something he does.
- *His only-begotten son*: “Begotten” is misleading. It refers not to a process by which the son comes into being, but rather to his uniqueness. The word is commonly used to describe an only child: Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11:34), the son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:12), the daughter of Jairus (Lk 8:42), the demon possessed son (Lk 9:38), Isaac (Heb 11:17). In each case, it emphasizes the pain that the parent feels when this child is lost. Here, it emphasizes the cost that God has incurred in sending his son.
- *Into the world*: We have already seen the world depicted as a sinful system, antagonistic to God. He sends his only Son into this hostile, corrupt environment.

that we might live through him.—The purpose of this action is to deliver us from the sentence of death that lay upon us.

Now he repeats these three points:

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,—Now he repeats these three points, starting with God's love for us. We are indeed to love God, as required by the Shema,

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: 5 And **thou shalt love the LORD thy God** with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy ~~might~~ wealth.

Moses gave Israel this exhortation on the plains of Moab, after their 40 years in the wilderness, which was after the covenant at Sinai, which was after he had redeemed them from Egypt. He goes on to emphasize that something came before all those things:

Deu 7:8 But **because the LORD loved you**, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, **hath the LORD** brought you out with a mighty hand, and **redeemed you** out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

⁵ In 3:5, 8, “manifested” describes Christ's first coming to take away our sin.

God commanded Israel to love him only after he demonstrated his love in redeeming them from bondage in Egypt. So we are to love God in response to his love for us, not seeking to earn it.

and sent his Son—The second point, after God’s love, is the gift of his Son. |

to be the propitiation for our sins.—The third point is our salvation, described as “propitiation” (ἱλασμός *hilasmos* G2434). Only John uses this word in the NT. The only other instance was in the introduction, describing God’s provision for sins of which we are not aware:

1John 2:2 And he is the **propitiation** for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

In pagan Greek literature, the word describes an offering that satisfies a deity’s wrath and renders it favorable toward the offerer. Some people are offended by attributing wrath to Israel’s God, and want to render the word “expiation.”⁶ But the scriptures are clear that God’s wrath burns against those who disobey him. For example:

Jhn 3:36 he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the **wrath of God** abideth on him.

Rom 1:18 For the **wrath of God** is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

God is justly offended by our sin. There is nothing we can bring to God to remove that offense. But God himself has provided an offering that will satisfy him, his unique Son.

We see this same pattern elsewhere (Table 3, chart).⁷

	God’s Love	Gift of his Son	Our Salvation
1 John 4:9	In this was manifested the love of God toward us,	because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world,	that we might live through him.
1 John 4:10	Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,	and sent his Son	to be the propitiation for our sins.
Rom 5:8-9	8 But God commendeth his love toward us,	in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.	9 Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.
John 3:16	For God so loved the world,	that he gave his only begotten Son,	that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Table 3: The Love-Gift-Life Pattern in the NT

When we contemplate the death of Christ, particularly when we “show forth his death” at the Table, the certainty of God’s love for us is the great truth that should fill our minds.

11-16 Love from our Abiding⁸

4:7-10 defined God’s loving nature, which we share as his children, and demonstrated that nature in sending his Son for our salvation. 4:11-16 establish our credentials as believers to make that argument, and then repeat it in inverse order (Table 4, chart). The major difference between the two panels is in the description of how we partake of God’s nature. In 7-10, we do so through

6 C.H. Dodd (*JTS* 32:128, July 1931, 352-360). This distortion has been amply answered, as summarized in L. Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, ch. 5-6.

7 Bible study principle: watch for repeated patterns—syntagms—in different passages; cf. The election syntagm in Rom 8:29-30; 2 Thes 2:13-14; 1 Pet 1:2-5.

8 6/25/25 I have revised my assessment of the theme of these two sections to reflect their parallelism

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	7-10		11-16
Heading	7 Beloved , let us love one another :		11 Beloved , if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.
God's Nature Defined & Shared	for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God , and knoweth God . 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love .		16b God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God , and God in him.
God's Nature Demonstrated	9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us , because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.		14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16a And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us .
Credible Witnesses to God's Nature			12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwel in him, and he in us, because that he hath given us of his Spirit.

Table 4: Correspondences in 4:7-16

rebirth, and the resulting knowledge of God (which is eternal life, John 17:3). In 11-16, we do so through our reciprocal dwelling (abiding, μένω *menō* G3306) in him. Contrast the two relations.

- Birth is a one-time event, but abiding is an ongoing relationship.
- Birth is one-way. God begets us. John emphasizes the two directions of abiding:
 - 13 we dwell in him and he in us
 - 15 God dwelleth in him, and he in God
 - 16 he ... dwelleth in God, and God in him

We have encountered this important word frequently in 1 John (Figure 6). More than half of its 121 NT instances (68) are in John, 1 John, and 2 John. Let's survey how the word is used in 1 John, before working through this passage in detail (Figure 7). The solid lines indicate something is abiding "in" something else. Blue references are in this section (4:11-16).

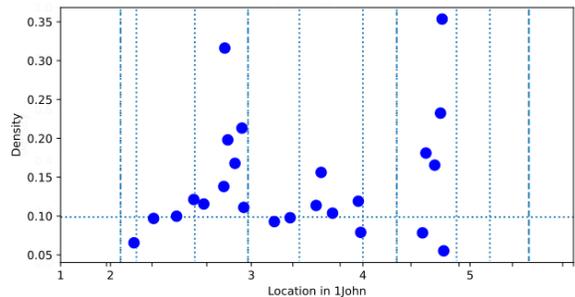


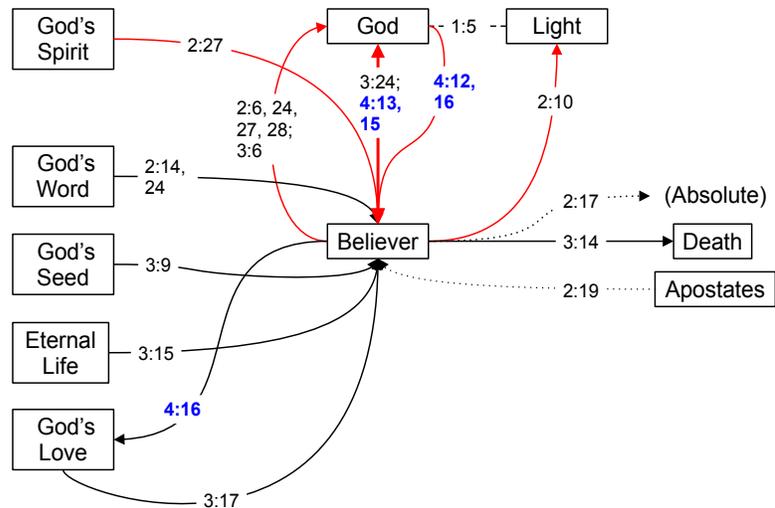
Figure 6: Abiding (μένω *menō* G3306) in 1 John

At the top center, with red arrows, are cases where the believer and God abide in one another. God is either named directly (most times), or referred to as his Spirit (2:27) or as light (2:10; cf. 1:5 "God is light"). These claims are a direct reflection of our Lord's words in John 15, "Abide in me, and I in you." John, in keeping with his emphasis in the sign of belief, does not hesitate to express this relation with the Lord Jesus as a relation directly with God. The concentration of references here shows that this is the central idea, and as the blue references show, our current section focuses on it.

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At the left are a series of things that are said to abide in the believer: God's word,⁹ his seed,¹⁰ his life, his love. It is helpful to consider these as the means by which we are enabled to abide in the Lord and enjoy his abiding presence in us.

The three references at the right do not fall cleanly into these two categories.¹¹



11, Introductory Exhortation

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.—Again John summarizes God's great demonstration of his loving character, and exhorts his readers.

Figure 7: What abides in what in 1 John? Solid line: abide in. Red: believer and the Lord. Blue: references in the third love section.

12-13, Credentials of the Messengers

The first section focused on God's nature as love, demonstrated in sending his Son to deliver his people from their sin. John was among those who witnessed the ministry of the Son of God, his sacrifice, and his resurrection. But now his claims come before a new generation of believers in Asia Minor, far from Jerusalem. They face a problem.

12 No man hath seen God at any time.—This God upon whose nature the exhortation in 4:7 rests is invisible. How can his nature be manifested to people who did not witness the work of Christ at first hand? This section proposes a solution to this problem.

An important clue to this solution lies in 4:12a. It clearly echoes a verse in the gospel (chart):

Jhn 1:18 **No man hath seen God at any time**; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

In the gospel, the solution to the problem of an invisible God is the Son. Now the solution is the body of believers. Just as the Son's ministry revealed God's character to his contemporaries, so we reveal God's character in our day.

4:12a and John 1:18 differ in the verbs they use for "see." The gospel uses the common verb ὁράω *horaō* G3708 (456x in the NT), which also appears nine times in the epistle. But 4:12 and 4:14 use a less common verb, θεάομαι *theaomai* G2300 (24x in the NT). Both verbs appear in 1 John 1:1, which gives us a clue as to the relation between them.

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning,
which we have **heard**,
which we have **seen** with our eyes, *horaō*

9 John 15:7 "if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you"

10 A reference to God's word, cf. 1 Pet 1:23; John 5:38; and the parable of the soils. Alford has an excellent note.

11 It is worth studying each of them in the light of this overall structure, but this is not the place for that study.

which we have **looked upon**, *theaomai*
and our hands have **handled**,
of the Word of life;

The verbs increase in the intimacy and detail of their interaction with the Lord Jesus and his life with the Father. We heard him. Not only that, we saw him. We didn't just see him, we studied him carefully. More than that, we actually touched him.

So 4:12 describes an even closer revelation of God than that described in John 1:18, and provided by the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus. People need to experience in detail the character of God.¹² That evidence is in the love that believers show to one another. Our love for one another gives the world a way to study closely what the otherwise invisible God is like. Just as his love was on display in the Lord Jesus, so it is on display in us. And the revelation through us allows a closer inspection than that through the Lord Jesus. It is an example of his promise,

Jhn 14:12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.

We are able to manifest the character of God because of the relation of dwelling, or abiding, that was prominent in the first panel.

If we love one another,—This verse echoes 2:5, in the first righteousness section:

1Jn 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the **love of God perfected**: hereby know we that **we are in him**.

The passages (Table 5) are parallel. In each, a **condition** leads to **perfect love**, which **assures us** of our condition.

The condition in 2:5, in a righteousness section, is “keeping his word,” while 4:12, in a love section, is “loving one another.” The two are parallel. The first love section begins by reminding us of “a new commandment,” recalling the Lord’s upper room exhortation to “love one another.”

	1 John 2:5	1 John 4:12-13
Condition	Whoso keepeth his word	If we love one another
Perfect love	In him is the love of God perfected	His love is perfected in us
Assurance	Hereby we know that we are in him.	13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, ...

Table 5: Parallels between 2:5 and 4:12-13

God dwelleth in us,—Here is the first instance of this key verb (Figure 7) in the section. Our love for one another is the result of our union with God. By loving one another, we show the character of the God who dwells in us, and in whom we dwell. God was in Christ (2 Cor 5:19), and now he dwells in us, making himself known to those among whom we live.

and his love is perfected in us.—This clause invites two questions.

- Is “love of God” in these verses subjective or objective genitive (or perhaps genitive of quality, “God’s kind love”)?¹³
- What does it mean for love to be perfected in us?

12 Matt 22:11 also shows this distinction: “And when the king came in to see [θεάομαι, look over, review] the guests, he saw [ὀράω, noticed] there a man which had not on a wedding garment:

13 Westcott: “His love, the love which answers to His nature and with which He has endowed us. ... Man receives the love of God and makes it his own. Neither of the two specially defined senses, ‘the love of God for man,’ or ‘the love of man for God,’ suits the context.” But in the parallel 2:5, Westcott favors subjective. So also Abbott, *Johannine Grammar*, 2034ff. But Plummer on 2:5 asserts that except for 4:9, “love of God” in 1 John is always objective genitive.

The answer to the second depends on how we answer the first, so let's think about the subjective vs. objective genitive. Both make sense.

- Subjective: “the love that God showed to us,” as just described in 4:7-10. The meaning then would be that we are now exercising the love with which God loved the world, realized in and flowing through us.
- Objective: “our love for God.” Elsewhere in the URD, the Lord Jesus said,
Jhn 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

We show our love for him by obeying his commands in general, and in particular, the command to love one another. This sense suits the righteousness context of 2:5, and anticipates the emphasis on our love for God that John is about to introduce in 4:19-5:4.

The parallel with 2:5 suggests the objective interpretation,¹⁴ but the ambiguity may be deliberate in 4:12, looking both back to 4:9-10 (God's love to us, demonstrated in sending his Son) and ahead to the coming righteousness section (our obedient love for God).

Now we can turn to the second question. What does it mean for the love of God to be perfected in us? The Greek root “perfect” means complete. With reference to our love for God (reading “love of God” as objective genitive), it is natural to expect John, a Jew, to have in mind the Shema, the daily confession of Israel:

Deu 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with **all** thine heart, and with **all** thy soul, and with **all** thy ~~might~~ wealth.

If we give priority to our emotional, physical, or economic well-being over our devotion to God, we have failed in this commandment, and our love for him is not made perfect. 2:5 says that one indicator that he is first in our affection is our obedience to his commandments. 4:12 says that another indicator is our love for one another.

13 Hereby know we—The parallel with 2:5 suggests that the “hereby” looks back to what he has just said. John is claiming that our love is evidence for something—in fact, for two things. The first is our reciprocal indwelling. The second is that God has given us his Spirit. The introductory particles, “that (we abide)” and “because (he hath given),” are the same Greek word (ὅτι *hoti* G3754), and it makes excellent sense to see the clauses as parallel, the second explaining the first. By our love for one another, we know two things (chart):

- that we are abiding in God and he in us, which is to say,
- that his Holy Spirit dwells in us.

Love warrants other conclusions as well (see note). In the previous love section, we learned,

1Jn 3:18 My little children, **let us not love** in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And **hereby we know that we are of the truth**, and shall assure our hearts before him.

And in the upper room, the Lord taught his disciples,

Jhn 13:35 By this shall all men know that **ye are my disciples, if ye have love** one to another.

Our love for one another shows

14 With Plummer, see previous note. 250722: I am now inclined to take this as subjective, generated by the abiding of the loving God in us, and encouraging a more bidirectional understanding of the genitive here.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

- that we are Christ's disciples (John 13:35)
- that we are of the truth (1 John 3:18-19)
- that we dwell in God, and he dwells in us (1 John 4:13)
- that we have the Holy Spirit. (1 John 4:13)

Now let's consider the two conclusions. The first is our mutual abiding in God.

that we dwell in him, and he in us,—This love for one another, reflecting God's love toward us, shows that we are indeed abiding in him, and he in us.

The translation "dwell" obscures the fact that we are dealing with the same verb, abiding, that we have seen often throughout the epistle (Figure 6). While the word itself is common, the reciprocal relation "we in him and he in us" is not. We saw it earlier only in 3:24, where the evidence for it is keeping God's commandments:

1Jn 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments **dwelleth in him, and he in him**. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

Again, "dwelleth" and "abideth" are the same verb. This reciprocity recurs a few verses later,

1Jn 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwelleth in him, and he in God**.

This reciprocity recalls the Lord's words in the gospel, in the metaphor of the vine:

John 15:4 **Abide in me, and I in you**. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

John 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: **He that abideth in me, and I in him**, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing

Clearly, John is recalling these words of the Lord. That parallel invites further discussion.

First, in the gospel, the one in whom we abide, and who abides in us, is the Lord Jesus. In the epistle, it is God (4:15). This shift emphasizes the point that John is making in the belief sections of the epistle, that the man Jesus is the divine Son of God.

Second, there are some other reciprocal statements in the gospel that direct our attention to God's word as a resource for helping us abide in Christ.

Just after 15:4, 5, the Lord says (chart),

John 15:7 If **ye abide in me, and my words abide in you**, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

This suggests an important resource for abiding in Christ: close engagement with his Word. This verse may be in John's mind in some earlier verses in the epistle. In 2:14, the abiding word of God brings victory in spiritual combat:

1Jn 2:14 ... I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and **the word of God abideth** in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

1 John 2:24 echoes both directions in John 15:7: the word abides in us, and we abide in God.

1Jn 2:24 Let that therefore **abide** in you, **which ye have heard from the beginning**. If **that which ye have heard** from the beginning shall **remain [abide] in you, ye also shall continue [abide]** in the Son, and in the Father.

A third reference in 1 John probably also refers to the indwelling Word of God:

1Jn 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for **his seed remaineth [abideth] in him**: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

“Seed” in the NT is a common metaphor for the word of God:

Mat 13:19 When any one heareth the **word** of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received **seed** by the way side. [also vv.20, 22, 23]

Luk 8:11 Now the parable is this: **The seed is the word of God.**

1Pe 1:23 Being born again, not of corruptible **seed**, but of incorruptible, by **the word of God**, which liveth and abideth for ever.

Our Lord discussed reciprocal abiding a year before the upper room discourse, in John 6:

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, **dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

This verse is the subject of extensive discussion with Papists, who understand it of transubstantiation at the Lord’s table. I have discussed it at length elsewhere.¹⁵ The Lord did not mean these words in a physical sense, for when the disciples are offended at them, at the end of the chapter, he rebukes them,

Jhn 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; **the flesh profiteth nothing**: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

Note how he shifts their attention from the (metaphorical) “flesh” to the (literal) “words that I speak unto you.” This conversation must have come to the memory of the disciples when, a year later, he gives them the bread and the cup in the upper room, and goes on to explain the coming of the Spirit and the privilege of reciprocal abiding. There again, he will emphasize the importance of his word abiding in them, as a crucial element of the intimate relation he wants to maintain with us, the relation of abiding.

Because that he hath given us of his Spirit.—We have already suggested that this clause is not giving the reason for our knowledge, but rather is explaining what it means to abide in God and he in us.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is the great promise of the New Covenant, the “other comforter” whom the Lord promised in John 14 (chart):

Jhn 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth **with** you, and shall be **in** you.

The distinction between the Spirit’s present dwelling **with** them and the promise of his future dwelling **in** them reflects the new covenant that the Lord was about to ratify with his death. Throughout the Old Testament, we read of the Spirit of the Lord coming **upon** people. For example, in the Judges,

Jdg 3:10 And the Spirit of the LORD came **upon** [Othniel]

Jdg 6:34 But the Spirit of the LORD came **upon** Gideon,

15 https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/john/notes/John_6_Flesh_Blood.pdf . See note.

Jdg 11:29 Then the Spirit of the LORD came **upon** Jephthah,
And repeatedly with Samson,

Jdg 14:6 And the Spirit of the LORD came mightily **upon** him,

Jdg 14:19 And the Spirit of the LORD came **upon** him,

Jdg 15:14 And when he came unto Lehi, the Philistines shouted against him: and the Spirit of the LORD came mightily **upon** him,

But the Lord had something better than this external accompaniment in store for the future (or new) covenant he promised to his people in the OT prophets:¹⁶

Ezk 36:26 A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put **within** you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my spirit **within** you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

He promised that his Spirit would not only come **upon** them from time to time, but that it would dwell permanently **within** them. This new covenant could not take effect until the Lord had offered the ratifying sacrifice, which we remember at the Lord's table when we recall his words,

Mat 26:28 For this is my blood of the new testament [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

Note the order of the events:

1. At the passover meal, he presents his blood as the ratification of the new covenant.
2. He then¹⁷ promises the new covenant gift of the Spirit, in John 14:15-31,
3. and immediately gives the metaphor of the vine and the branches in John 15:1-17.

The role of the Spirit in the abiding is supported elsewhere in 1 John (chart). In the first belief section, he told us that

1Jn 2:27 ... the **anointing** which ye have received of him **abideth** in you, ...

We saw in that passage that “the anointing” is a reference to God's Spirit. So it is natural for John to introduce the Spirit here as the means by which this indwelling occurs.

Another parallel to the Spirit as the means of abiding is at the end of the second love section:

1Jn 3:24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

In both cases,

- The preceding clause describes our behavior (keeping his commandments; loving one another).
- We know that we abide on the basis of this behavior (“hereby we know”).
- The verse goes on to involve the Spirit.

In 4:13, the indwelling Spirit is presented as an amplification of how God dwells in us. How is he involved in 3:24?

¹⁶ The name is given in Jer 31:31. Isaiah already described essential elements of this covenant (the gift of the Spirit and internalization of God's words) in Isa 59:21.

¹⁷ John 13:2, “supper being ended.”

Figure 8 shows two alternative ways to read the verse.¹⁸ In both readings, *what* we know is the same—that God abides in us (the same conclusion as 4:13). In both readings, *how* we know is that we satisfy one of the signs—righteousness in 3:24, love in 4:13 (in both cases, described in the previous clause). What is the role of the phrase “by the Spirit”? We usually understand it in 3:24 as in the top diagram, explaining how we know, but then it is competing with the preceding reason, our obedience. It seems smoother in 3:24 to attach “by the Spirit” to “abideth,” as in the bottom diagram. As in 4:13, so in 3:24, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is how God abides in us.

We know that he abideth in us hereby he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him ... by the Spirit which he hath given us
--

We know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us hereby he that keepeth his commandments abideth in him ...
--

Figure 8: Alternative syntaxes of 1 John 3:24.

This insight is critical to understanding the relation between the writings of John and of Paul. As we have seen, John repeatedly emphasizes the relation of our abiding in Christ (or in God) and his abiding in us, but Paul never uses that language. This does not mean, though, that Paul neglects the concept. He repeatedly speaks of the importance of having the Holy Spirit dwelling in us, and of our being “in Christ.” For example,

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that **the Spirit of God dwell [οικέω, not μένω] in you**. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

2Co 5:17 Therefore if any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Furthermore, he relates the two closely:

1Co 12:13 For by one **Spirit** are we all baptized **into one body**, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; ...

Paul emphasizes that the Spirit is in us, and has placed us into (the body of Christ). This is the same relation that John sets forth under the vocabulary of abiding. It also emphasizes that we abide in Christ, not as isolated individuals, but through the interactions of a local church.

Because the Holy Spirit is integral to abiding in Christ, the NT exhorts us at least four times how we are to respond to the Spirit.¹⁹ The Lord commands us (John 15:4) “Abide in me, and I in you,” and these commands tell us how to cultivate this relation (chart).

Obedience

Gal. 5:16 This I say then, **Walk in the Spirit**, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. ...
 25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also **walk in the Spirit**.

To walk in the Spirit is to be sensitive to his promptings, and obedient to them. Live every day attentive and submissive to his voice. Recall the example of Paul:

Act 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were **forbidden of the Holy Ghost** to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but **the Spirit suffered them not**.

¹⁸ See note for more detailed diagram of the proposed interpretation.

¹⁹ I identified these by searching (in Greek) for verses that contain both the word “Spirit” and an imperative verb.

2Co 2:12 Furthermore, when I came to Troas to preach Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, 13 **I had no rest in my spirit**, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia.

Yieldedness

Eph. 5:18 And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but **be filled with the Spirit**;
Every believer has all of the Spirit, but the Spirit does not have all of every believer. A good example is Mary's ointment in Bethany:

Jhn 12:3 Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and **the house was filled** with the odour of the ointment.

The ointment was certainly in the house before she opened it, but it did not fill the house. We should open every area of our lives to the Spirit's presence, inspection, and influence.

Attention

Rev. 2:7 He that hath an ear, **let him hear what the Spirit saith** unto the churches; (also 2:11,17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22)

The Spirit is God's channel of revelation to us. We learned this truth in the first belief section:

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as **the same anointing teacheth you of all things**, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

This principle lies behind Paul's exhortation to the Thessalonians,

1Th 5:19 **Quench not the Spirit.** 20 Despise not prophesyings. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.

Kindness to Other Believers

The Spirit is our Lord's gift to the church, not just to us as individuals. Recall how Paul expresses the idea of abiding in Christ, in terms of our place in the church, the body of Christ. The Spirit works through our interactions with one another, as in Acts 13:

Act 13:2 As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, **the Holy Ghost said**, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.

Thus any unkindness that we do to one another will hinder his work:

Eph 4:29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. 30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit** of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Notice two things about the credentials of those who visibly represent the invisible God.

First, v. 13 grounds this claim to be indwelt by a loving but invisible God in the tangible, observable love of believers for one another, according to the Lord's promise in John 13:35.

Second, nothing in these credentials is specific to the apostles. In 1:1-4, the "we" is exclusive of the readers. In those verses, John, as one of the twelve, bears witness to "you" of what he has seen and heard. But here the credential of being indwelt by the Spirit, demonstrated by love

among the brethren, is shared by all believers. The audience for this message of God’s love is not just the community of the faithful, but the unbelieving world in which God has placed them.

14-16a, Demonstration: The Father’s Loving Gift of his Son

With these credentials, John repeats the message of 7-10, in inverse order (chart). First he repeats the claim that Christ’s coming demonstrates the Father’s love. These verses offer numerous parallels to John 3:16-18, expanding on those already evident in 4:9-10 (Table 6).

1 John 4:9-10	John 3	1 John 4:14-16a
9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world , that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God , but that he loved us, ...	16 For God so loved the world , that he gave his only begotten Son , that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life .	16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.
... and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.	17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world ; but that the world through him might be saved .	14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world .
	18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God .	15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God , God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

Table 6: Parallels between John 3:16-18 and 1 John 4:14-16

- Jesus is the Son of God
- God sent his Son to save the world (3:17; 4:14)
- This sending demonstrated his love to us (3:16; 4:16)
- We access this salvation by believing (3:16,18; 4:15, 16)

14 And we have seen *theaomai* and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.—This verse recalls how John the Baptist introduced the Lord Jesus, probably based on the apostle’s experience.²⁰ It echoes a statement in John 1 from John the Baptist (chart):

Jhn 1:34 And I saw *horaō*, and bare record *martureō* that this is the Son of God.

Now John the apostle says,

1Jn 4:14 We have seen *theaomai* and do testify *martureō* that the Father sent the Son ...

As in 4:12, the epistle replaces the Gospel’s verb for seeing with one describing careful, intimate observation.

Jhn 1:18 No man hath seen *horaō* God at any time;

1Jn 4:12 No man hath seen *theaomai* God at any time.

²⁰ John 1:35ff records that John introduced the Lord to Andrew and an unnamed disciple, traditional identified as John the apostle.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

The change in verb reflects their different exposure. John the Baptist, seeing the Spirit descending, recognized Jesus as the Messiah. The disciples, living with the Lord for three and a half years, give a more intimate report.

The apostle's testimony is the same as the Baptist's. John the Baptist reported:

Jhn 1:29 Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the **world**.

The apostle describes the Son as “the Savior of the world.” John 3:17 describes the Father's purpose “that the world through him might be saved.” These statements do not mean that everybody will be saved. In John 3:16-18, we have a solemn warning that only those who believe will be saved:

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but **he that believeth not is condemned already**, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

God sent his son “that the world ... might be saved” (John 3:17), but some are still condemned.

So what does it mean to save the world (or as the Baptist says in John 1:29, to take away its sin)? The phrase “savior of the world” that we find in 1 John 4:14 appears only one other time in the Bible, in the Lord's discussion with the Samaritans in John 4. At the start of the conversation, the woman draws attention to the ethnic distinction between Jews and Samaritans:

Jhn 4:9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

But after she calls her countrymen, we read,

Jhn 4:41 And many more believed because of his own word; 42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, **the Saviour of the world**.

By “Savior of the world” they recognize the Lord as their savior as well as the savior of the Jews.²¹ Jewish writings of the time of Christ speak of God as “the eternal savior of Israel,”²² but John encourages his readers (probably Gentiles of Ephesus and the surrounding area) that the Lord's salvation now includes them.

So the argument runs:

- No one has seen God (12a). So how can we know (7-10) that Jesus is the Son of God, sent by a loving Father to give us life?
- But God dwells in us, through his Spirit (12b-13), and you can see his love demonstrated in our love for one another.
- We have intimate, direct knowledge of the Father and the Son (14a),
- and on that basis we bear witness to God's loving gift of his Son (14b).

4:14 is closely parallel to 1:1-2 (Table 7, chart). In both cases, we have

21 See Gill's note on usage of כל העולם on 1 John 2:2: “Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles עלמא, “the world”; and כל העולם, “the whole world”; and אומות העולם, “the nations of the world”

22 3 Macc 7:16. The context of that verse describes the deliverance of the Jews of Alexandria, Egypt under Ptolemy IV Philopator (221-204 BC), and their execution of Jews who had been unfaithful (who clearly are not included in the “Israel” that God saved).

1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon , and our hands have handled, of the Word of life ; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness , and shew unto you that eternal life , which was with the Father , and was manifested unto us;)	4:14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.
--	--

Table 7: Parallels between 1:1-2 and 4:14

- the verb *theaomai* G2300 indicating intense observation;
- the verb “witness, testify” (μαρτυρέω *martureō* G3140) indicating a report by someone with personal experience;
- the Father;
- the sending (4:14) or manifesting (1:2) of the Son by the Father to the world.

The major difference between the two passages is the characterization of our Lord. In 4:14, he is simply “the Son” functioning as “the Savior of the world.” But 1:2 emphasizes the life he lived with the Father, “that eternal life which was with the Father.” We saw in chapter 1 that John is describing the life of the Son with the Father, as a pattern for our life of fellowship with the Father. This life of fellowship is what John has been describing as “abiding” or “dwelling,” and he goes on now to remind us how we access this relation.

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.—Eternal life is the ongoing relation of our abiding in God, and he in us.²³ John here surrounds this prospect with two conditions: confession and belief (Figure 9). These conditions go beyond what we read in 4:9-10. There, John simply said that we can live through the Son of God, but here John tells us how.

15a Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God,	↓ ↑	16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us.
God dwelleth in him, and he in God.		

Figure 9: How to Dwell with God

Moses already anticipated these two conditions in Deut 30:14, and Paul quotes that verse in setting forth these same two conditions:

Rom 10:8 But what saith it [the Scripture]? The word is nigh thee, even in thy **mouth**, and in thy **heart** [Deut 30:14]: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 9 That if thou shalt confess with thy **mouth** the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine **heart** that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

John’s confession that Jesus is the Son of God matches Paul’s confession of Jesus as Lord. Our belief that God loves us is based on the historical fact that God sent him to die and rise for us.

These conditions reinforce our conclusion that “Savior of the world” does not promise that everybody will be saved. Only those who confess and believe have the eternal life that consists of dwelling in God and he in us.

16b, Definition and Sharing: Dwellers in God who is Love will Love

4:7-10 has two parts. The second, paralleled in vv. 14-16a, teaches that God demonstrated his love in sending his Son to die and rise for us. The first part of 4:7-10 defines love as the intrinsic

²³ John 17:3 And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

nature of God, and tells how we are united to him. In 4:7-8, the union was based on our new birth. Here, it is based on our dwelling, or abiding.

God is love;—This testimony brings us back to the claim of 4:8: God is Love.

and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God [dwelleth] in him.—Once more, here is the reciprocal abiding that our Savior promised in John 15. And as we have observed, John boldly identifies the one in whom we abide, and who abides in us, not just as Jesus, but as God.

17-18, Assurance in Judgment

Each of the first two love sections included a word of assurance to the readers (chart):

- In 2:18-28, the assurance to the little children, young men, and fathers (2:12-14)
- In 3:11-14, the assurance of hearts that do not condemn us (3:18-24)

The third love section concludes with a comparable section on assurance. These assurance sections reinforce the overall objective of the book:

1Jn 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that ye may know that ye have eternal life**, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

There is much depth in these two verses, and we will explore them in detail, noting in particular:

- what it means for love to be made perfect,
- the boldness that God promises us in the day of judgment,
- our relation to the world, and
- the relation of love and fear.

17a, Perfected Love

The first point that deserves our attention is the notion of love that is made perfect.

17 Herein—As in 4:13, this expression probably looks back to the previous statement. Our love for one another shows that we are abiding in God and he is in us.

is our love made perfect,—This abiding is what makes our love complete. “Our love” is pretty clearly subjective genitive: we are doing the loving. But whom do we love?

This verse and the next both mention love that is perfect, or complete. John has mentioned perfect love twice previously in the epistle. The first is in the first righteousness section,

1Jn 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the **love of God perfected:** hereby know we that we are in him.

This verse is a clear echo of John 14:15, where the object of our love is the Lord:

Jhn 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. [Also 14:21]

So “our love” in 4:17 is first of all our love for God, shown in obedience. But in loving one another, we are obeying his command, fulfilling the law, and thus demonstrating perfect love:

Rom 13:8 Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for **he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.**

So there is a close relation²⁴ between loving God, and loving one another as he commands us.

The other “love perfected” verse that appears earlier in 1 John is:

1Jn 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and **his love is perfected in us.**

It is extremely difficult to resolve whether “his love” in 4:12 is subjective or objective.²⁵ Perhaps the most natural reading is that our love for one another is really God loving them through us.

17b, Boldness (Confidence)

The second big idea is that perfect love leads to boldness before God.

that ἵνα we may have boldness in the day of judgment κρίσις *krisis* G2920:—Perfected love, shown in our love for one another, give us boldness (*παρρησία parrēsia* G3954). Like perfected love, boldness (sometimes translated “confidence”) is a recurring theme in the epistle. It appears once in each panel. In the first panel, in the belief section, we read,

1John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have **confidence**, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

In 2:28, as in 4:17, this boldness is related to our abiding in him. Conscious, deliberate maintenance of our relation with the Lord yields fruit and grants us boldness.

The second panel also mentions boldness:

1John 3:21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we **confidence** toward God.

In our study of that passage, we saw that the reason our heart does not condemn us is that God is working effectively to bring us to Christlikeness.

Boldness also appears once in the conclusion:

1John 5:14 And this is the **confidence** that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

John wants us to have boldness before God. His emphasis recalls the great theme of Hebrews, which traces this boldness to our Savior’s work:

Heb 4:14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come **boldly** unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

17c, Our Relation to the World

The third point that commands our attention is the last part of 4:17, “as he is, so are we in this world. This saying is at first reading very enigmatic. The clue to its meaning is to recognize in it a reference to the Lord’s words in his high priestly prayer, John 17. In the light of this reference, we can see that our assurance is based on our distinctive relation to the world.

24 A mathematician might call it a homomorphism.

25 I have reversed my position during the course of this study—see note on 4:12 above.

because that ὅτι as he is, so are we in this world.—This statement expresses the content of our boldness, the fact in which we have confidence, based on our Lord’s prayer in John 17 (chart).

Jhn 17:11 And now I am no more in the world, but **these are in the world**, ... 14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because **they are not of the world ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, even as I am not of the world**. 15 I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. 16 **They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world**.

The Lord begins by describing our current position “in the world” (17:11), which John repeats: “so are we in this world.” This is not the point of similarity, for he is no longer in the world. The critical similarity comes later, twice: both he and we “are not of the world.”²⁶ During this time, even though we (unlike him) are “in the world,” we have this in common with him: neither he nor we are “of the world,” part of the world system. Though in the world, we are not of it.

Remember how John defines the world:

1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is **of the world**.

To be “of the world” is to be governed by our own internal drives, in violation of God’s fundamental command to his people,²⁷

Deu 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy ~~might~~ abundance.

John often uses the phrase “of the world.” In John 8, it distinguishes the Lord from the scribes and pharisees,

John 8:23 And he said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: **ye are of this world; I am not of this world**.

The scribes and Pharisees, unlike the Lord, were not devoting their natural drives completely to the Lord. They, unlike him, were “of the world.” Like Moses, he is “a stranger in a strange land” (Exod 2:22). In the upper room, he describes his disciples in the same way, and tells them to expect the same rejection he experienced:

John 15:19 If ye were **of the world**, the world would love his own: but because **ye are not of the world**, but I have chosen you **out of the world**, therefore the world hateth you.

Recall John’s description of the false teachers in the first panel

1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but **they were not of us ἐξ ἡμῶν**; for if they had been **of us**, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all **of us**.

The false teachers, though they had been *in* the church, were not *of* the body of Christ. Instead, as John write in the second panel:

1John 4:5 **They are of the world**: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

26 “Of” here is not simply the genitive case, but the preposition ἐκ *ek* G1537, “from, out of.”

27 See https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/1john/notes/1John_FirstPanel.pdf, and the larger study of Deut 6:5 and its echoes throughout the Bible at <https://cyber-chapel.org/DoctrinalStudies/ThreeChoices/ThreeChoices.pdf>.

Now he reminds the faithful disciples of the Lord's words in John 17. "As he is" (not of the world), "so are ye" (not of the world), even while living "in the world."

How is our status of not being of the world related to our boldness in the day of judgment? The coming "day of judgment" is specifically addressed to "the world" of which we are not a part.

The Lord promises that those who believe on him are exempt from the final judgment (chart):²⁸

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and **shall not come into condemnation (κρίσις *krisis* G2920)**; but is passed from death unto life.

"Condemnation" *krisis* is the judgment process, and must be distinguished from κρίμα *krima* G2917, which is the verdict. Believers do not even enter the court as defendants. The Lord distinguishes those who are raised unto life from those who are raised to face judgment:

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of **damnation *krisis***.

Peter makes the same distinction:

2Pet. 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of **judgment *krisis*** to be punished:

The last judgment is specifically addressed to the world:

John 12:31 Now is the **judgment *krisis* of this world**: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

So those who (like the Lord Jesus) are "not of this world" will not appear as defendants in the "day of judgment." Truly, we can have boldness when that day comes.

The Bible does talk about believers being judged (chart). This happens when he chastens us, for example, with sickness:

1Cor. 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are **judged**, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

But this very text emphasizes the distinction between our current chastisement and the world's future condemnation.²⁹

Other NT verses anticipate a future time of accountability for God's people:

2Cor. 5:10 For we must all appear before the **judgment seat βῆμα *bēma* G968** of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. [also Rom 14:10; compare Heb 10:30; 2 Tim 4:1]

Paul describes this judgment when he writes,

1Co 3:13 Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. 14 If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. 15 If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

28 In these verses, the distinction between κρίσις *krisis* G2920 (the process of judgment) and κρίμα *krima* G2917 (the decree or result of judgment) is critical. Believers do not even enter the court as defendants.

29 The distinction aligns with the discussion of whether or not believers fear the Lord, in the next paragraph.

Again, Paul carefully distinguishes this judgment, from which the believer is saved, from the great white throne, where the guilty are cast into the lake of fire. That judgment applies only to the world, not to us.

18, Love and Fear

The fourth main theme in 4:17-18 is the relation of love and fear in the believer's life. Like the rest of these verses, it only makes sense in the light of the coming day of judgment.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear:—John asserts that love and fear are fundamentally incompatible. “Casteth out” is a very strong idiom, used for discarding something of no value. The Lord uses it to describe fishermen sorting their catch (chart):

Mat 13:47 Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but **cast the bad away**.

Taken by itself, this verse might suggest that if we love God, we need not fear him. This conclusion would conflict with other passages. Moses taught,

Deut. 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to **fear** the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to **love** him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

This is not just an OT principle. Peter says, while urging us to love one another,

1Pet. 2:17 Honour all men. **Love** the brotherhood. **Fear God**. Honour the king.

Paul condemns those for whom

Rom. 3:18 There is **no fear of God** before their eyes.

and exhorts us,

2Cor. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the **fear of God**.

Eph. 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the **fear of God**.

Phil. 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling**.

Each of these texts speaks of our attitude toward the Lord in our daily lives. God chastens those whom he loves (Heb 12:6). Knowing this, and fearing the discomfort it will bring, we strive to obey him day by day. But John is not talking about what happens day by day. He is talking about “the day of judgment” (4:17), when the Lord returns, as he told us when he mentioned our boldness (confidence) in the first panel (chart):

1Jn 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have **confidence [boldness parrēsia]**, and not be ashamed before him **at his coming**.

Recall the vision of the Lord's return that John saw in Revelation 19.

Rev 19:11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

The passage describes two groups of people, one in front of him and one behind. In front of him,

Rev 19:19 ... I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army.

Earlier, John described their attitude at this point:

Rev 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: 17 For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?

They do not have confidence in the day of judgment. But another group follows the Lord:

Rev 19:14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

They have no fear in this day of judgment, because there is no uncertainty. When the Lord returns, humanity is already divided, between those who are his (following him) and those who are not (facing him). In the day of judgment, perfect love throws any thought of fear out of the door (Law).

because fear hath torment.—The word translated “torment” (κόλασις *kolasis* G2851) is better rendered “punishment.” It appears only one other time in the NT.³⁰

Matt. 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting **punishment**: but the righteous into life eternal.

Again, the context is the outcome of the final judgment, which has already been determined when the court sits. The kind of fear that love casts out is the fear of that judgment. Our Substitute has already borne it for us, and we are joyfully exempt. We should fear God’s loving chastisement in his life, but never his wrath or final judgment.

He that feareth is not made perfect in love.—This assurance section closes by taking us back to the initial theme, of love that has been made perfect by our reciprocal abiding in the Lord.

Summary of the Sign of Love

We have now completed the three sections of 1 John that describe the sign of love. Table 8 compares how this sign is presented in each panel.

	2:7-17	3:11-24	4:7-18
Argument	Obey the Commandment : walk in the light	Follow the Example	Reflect the Source : God is love
Contrast	Love brother vs. love the world	Cain vs. Christ	Born of God vs. Mutual Abiding
Assurance	Recognize victories: Sins forgiven, Satan overcome, Fellowship with Christ	God is greater than our heart	We are not of the world, so we are exempt from the last judgment

Table 8: The Sign of Love in the Three Panels

Compare the *argument* in each panel that love indeed shows that we have eternal life.

³⁰ See note for interesting uses in Ezekiel LXX.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

- In the first panel, John draws their attention to the **commandment** both old and new (using the word four times in the first two verses), probably referring to the Lord’s commandment in the upper room to “love one another as I have loved you” (John 13:34). He urges them to “walk in the light,” an OT metaphor for obedience (Ps 119:105).
- In the second panel, he repeats the exhortation to “love one another,” but now it is a message, not a commandment. Instead, he exhorts them on the basis of **example**, to follow the pattern of Christ, not that of Cain.
- In the third panel, the motivation is the **source** of our love in the character of God, who is love. The fact that we are born of him and he dwells in us should lead to our manifesting his character of love.

The main body of the sign in each panel consists of a *contrast*.

- In the first, we are confronted with two mutually exclusive objects for our love: our brethren, and the world.
- In the second, we face the contrast of Cain, who hated his brother, and Christ, who loved his.
- In the third, we learn two mechanisms through which we share God’s character of love: as his children, and as those in whom he dwells and who dwell in him.

Finally, each of the signs is associated with a paragraph of *assurance*, in line with the objective of the epistle.

- In the first, the assurance is the observation of the signs of life at each stage of spiritual maturity.
- In the second, John focuses on the internal witness of our hearts, while urging us that God’s forgiveness can overcome our failures.
- In the third, the assurance is that as those who dwell in the God who dwells in us, we are not part of the world, the target of God’s judgment, and so will not suffer that condemnation.

4:19-5:4, Righteousness

The third righteousness section brings together distinctive ideas from earlier discussions of all three signs. The first panel emphasized keeping God’s commandments as the mark of obedience (red dots in Figure 10). In the second panel, the focus of righteousness shifted to our relation to God as his children, whom he has begotten (purple). In both the first and the second panels, the words “brother” (yellow) and “love” (blue) focus on the sign of love, not the sign of righteousness. The third panel uses all three terms to describe what it means to be righteous, and also concentrates the victory over the world that was introduced in the first love section and the second belief section (orange).

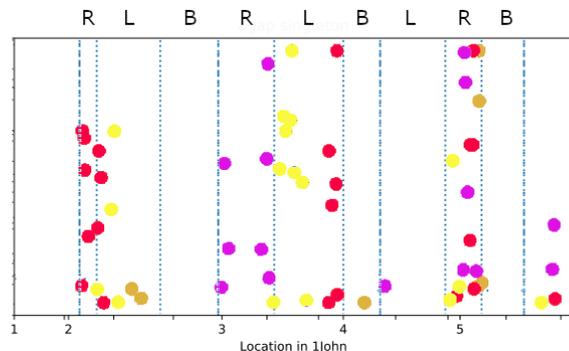


Figure 10: Brother (yellow), command or keep (red), overcome (orange), beget or child (purple)

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

While the third righteousness section thus merges themes from the first two, it develops one that has only been hinted at previously: while love reflects God’s love for us, righteousness shows our love for God (Figure 11). This theme was introduced in the first righteousness section:

1Jn 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Until now, John deemphasizes it:

1Jn 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Now it is in focus. In the Upper Room, the Lord linked keeping his commandments with loving him:

Jhn 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Jhn 14:21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

This shift in the usage of the verb “love,” as well as the return to “keeping commands” from the first righteousness section and our position as begotten of God from the second, identifies this as a third righteousness section, though it includes themes from all three signs (Figure 10).

The structure emerges from the interactions of three major **players** in the drama, two fundamental **teachings**, and the **verbs** that connect them (Figure 12). This kind of diagram is called a “concept map.”³¹

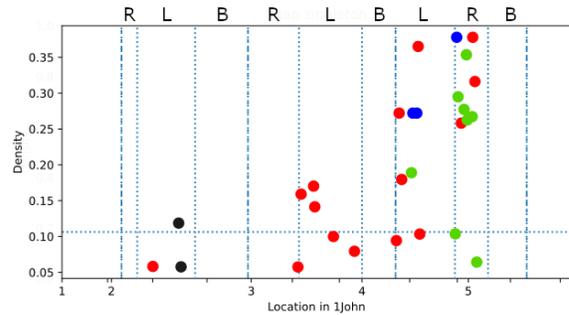


Figure 11: The verb "love" (ἀγαπάω αγαπαῶ G25) in 1 John. Red: we love others. Black: we love the world. Blue: God loves us. Green: we love God.

- Three **players** interact in these verses (blue rectangles): God, the brethren, and the world.

- Two **teachings** (red borders) are in focus: his commandments (preeminently, to love one another) and the doctrine that the man Jesus is the divine Christ.

- Words without borders are **verbs** that show how the boxes interact with one another. Solid arrows connect two boxes. Dashed arrows terminate in a verb, and indicate interaction among the verbs.

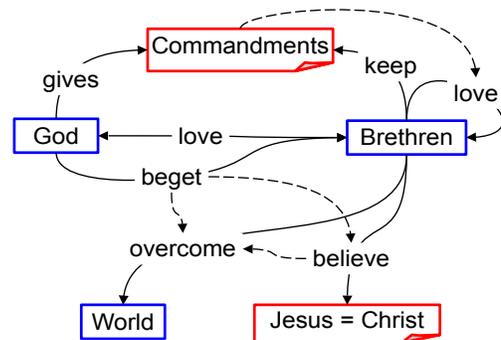


Figure 12: The causal structure of 1 John 4:19-5:4

	4:19-21	5:1-3	5:4	
Brother				4:19-21, The Nature of Righteousness: Loving Obedience
Love God				
Commandments				
Jesus is Christ				5:1-3, The Source of Righteousness: The New Birth
Born, Beget				
Faith, believe				
Overcome				5:4, The Effect of Righteousness: Victory
World				

Table 9: Distribution of concepts in the third righteousness section

31 Novak, J. D. & A. J. Cañas, The Theory Underlying Concept Maps and How to Construct and Use Them, Technical Report IHMC CmapTools 2006-01 Rev 01-2008, Florida Institute for Human and Machine Cognition, 2008, available at: <http://cmap.ihmc.us/docs/pdf/TheoryUnderlyingConceptMaps.pdf>

These concepts and their relations are not distributed evenly throughout the section, but appear successively (Table 9). First we read about God and his children (the “brothers”), and the dominant verb is love. Then the role of the Lord Jesus comes into focus, mediated by the verbs “beget” and “born” (both representing the same Greek word) and “believe.” Finally, we read of the world, and the verb is “overcome.”

The word “brother,” which has been a hallmark of the first two love sections, is only in 4:19-21, transitioning from the third love section, while overcoming the world in 5:4 prepares us for the third belief section to follow. Between these two, in 5:1-3, we have the only reference to the Lord Jesus in this section. Other concepts tie these sections together, the first with the second or the second with the third.

4:19-21, The Nature of Righteousness: Loving Obedience

The first paragraph in the argument is marked by a concentration of references to our relation to one another as brethren, and the completion of the cycle of love between us and God, marked by keeping his commandments.

19 We love him,³² because he first loved us.—Most modern translations read simply, “We love, because he first loved us.” This is certainly true. All true love, of God, or of our brethren, or of our enemies, flows from God’s love for us. But most NT manuscripts identify God as the object of our love in the first clause, making a strong transition from the previous section to this one. That section (the third love section) developed the teaching of John 3:16 that God showed his love for us in sending his Son (Table 6). Now the righteousness section demands that we love him in return, and tells us what such love means.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar:—The language recalls the three warnings against the deception of false confidence in chapter 1 (chart).

1Jn 1:6 **If we say** that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, **we lie**, and do not the truth:

8 **If we say** that we have no sin, **we deceive ourselves**, and the truth is not in us.

10 **If we say** that we have not sinned, **we make him a liar**, and his word is not in us.

In each case, the truth of our speech must be validated:

- by our actions (1:6; 4:20);
- by our own conscience (1:8);
- by God’s word (1:10).

Now he gives the reason for this claim:

for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?—Two objects for our love, our brother and God, lie at the heart of the law. Both are enjoined in the Old Testament:

Deut 6:5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Lev 19:18 Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

32 Following the majority reading

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

The first four of the ten commandments tell us how to love the Lord, while the last six tell us how to love our neighbor.

This summary of the law is in focus during passion week, when a Jewish lawyer tests the Lord with a question:

Mat 22:35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

He no doubt expected Deut 6:5, the Shema, which devout Jews recite twice daily.

The Lord refused to single out one commandment, but instead joins love for God with love for one’s neighbor:

22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Note his words, “the second is like unto it.” It would be a mistake to pursue the first while ignoring the second.

Together, these two commandments form the heart of the Sermon on the Mount (Table 10).³³ Between chiasmic references to the law and the prophets, the Lord organizes his instruction around our responsibility first to other men, then to God.

Note the wording, “how can he love God”? The question is not simply whether he *does* indeed love God, but whether he is *able* to. This ability is tied to the invisibility of God, which John discussed in 1 John 4:12 and John 1:18. The Lord Jesus came in the flesh so that we could respond to him. Since his ascension, he is invisible, and believers provide a tangible representation of the invisible God. In both cases, our human limitations require a tangible focus to relate to the invisible God. In 4:12, our love for one another reveals the love of God for us in sending his Son. Now our love for one another reveals the truth of our love for him. In pagan religions, people show their love for God by offerings to idols. In Romanism, they show it by bowing down before an impotent matzoh cracker. Believers show it by loving one another.

Setting	4:25-5:2		7:28-8:1
Blessings & Warnings	5:3-12, Blessings		7:13-27, Warnings
Law & Prophets	5:17-19		7:12b
Manward: Love thy Neighbor	5:20-48 (contrast: “them of old time”)		7:1-12a (absolute)
Godward: Love the Lord	6:1-18 (contrast: “the hypocrites”)		6:19-34 (absolute)

Table 10: Chiasmic structure of the Sermon on the Mount, and the Two Commandments

The Lord highlights this relation between our love for one another and our love for him in his description of the judgment of the nations at his return (chart):

Mat 25:40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

Mat 25:45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.—To complete the argument, John recalls from the first righteousness section that loving God means keeping his commandments, particularly the commandment to love one another:

³³ <https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/matt/notes/Matt5a.pdf>

Jhn 14:15 If ye love me, keep my commandments. ... 21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

Jhn 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

So the nature of righteousness is obedience to God’s commandments, in particular, to love.

5:1-3, The Source of Righteousness: The New Birth

John now recalls the book’s central doctrine that Jesus is the Christ. and the process of belief and new birth that rests on him. Though he no longer uses the word “brother,” the concept is still active: believing that Jesus is the Christ is evidence of a new birth that makes us all God’s children and thus members of his family. The themes of loving God and keeping his commandments are still in focus (Table 9). The new birth is the source of the love among brethren that fulfills God’s commandment and thus demonstrates our righteousness.

The flow of thought in this section is best captured by focusing on the relevant section of the concept map from Figure 12, Figure 13 (chart).

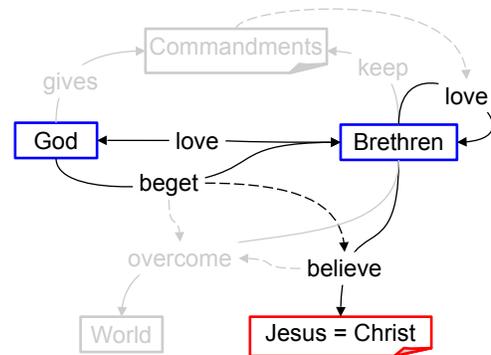


Figure 13: Flow of thought in 5:1-3

5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is has been born (γεννάω *gennaō* G1080) of God:—Note the tenses of the Greek verbs in this sentence (chart).

“Believeth” is in the present tense, describing those who continually believe. “Is born” is the perfect tense, which we can translate “has been born.” In every case in 1 John but one (5:18, which see), the verb “is born” with the believer as the subject is in the perfect tense: it is something that happened to us in the past, but has enduring consequences.³⁴

The new birth precedes and enables our faith,³⁵ so our ongoing belief in the human-divine Lord Jesus is evidence that we have been born of God. John’s readers have resisted the false teachers, and hold to the fundamental truth that the man Jesus is the divine Christ. This faith results from and demonstrates their new birth into a new family structure. Those who share God as their Father are related to one another as siblings. Recognizing this relation naturally leads to love:

and every one that loveth him that begat *gennaō* loveth him also that is begotten *gennaō* of him.—This verse gives the underlying reason for 4:20, which said that if we love God, we must love our brothers. The reason lies in understanding how they are our brothers. Two people are brothers if they have the same parent, but which parent is in view? When people speak about the brotherhood of men, they usually have in mind that we are all human, descended from a common human ancestor. But John is talking about people whose father is God. Their common faith shows that they have been born of God. In this case, it would make no sense to say that we love God our Father, and yet not love others whose father he is as well.

34 If you do not know Greek, consult the Tense-Voice-Mood (TVM) notations in your Bible software.

35 Faith in turn leads to eternal life. See note on the relation of this verse to the order of salvation.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments:—This statement involves four subordinate clauses (A, B, C, D), which we must untangle one at a time.

The main clause is common in 1 John, “We know.”³⁶ This book is all about our knowledge—ultimately, that we have eternal life (5:13), but along the way, knowledge of signs that encourage us of our assurance of eternal life.

The first subordinate clause (A) describes **what we know**: “that we love the children of God.” This condition is the heart of the sign of love, which John has just described.

The conjunctions “by this,” “when,” and “for” introduce three more subordinate clauses. Each of these clauses modifies a verb. “By this” explains how some other verb acts. “When” explains when it takes place. “For” amplifies or explains. But what verb does each one modify?³⁷ Figure 14 (chart) shows a set of connections that make sense.

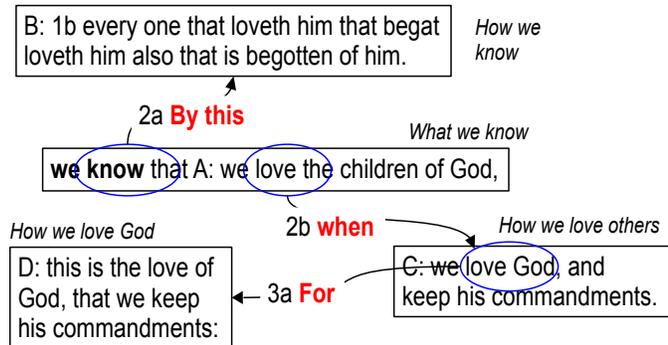


Figure 14: Parsing 1 John 5:1-3

The second subordinate clause (B, 1b), immediately before “we know,” tells us **how we know**. This knowledge comes from the argument just presented in 5:1. We know that we love God’s children, because we recognize one another as having the same divine Father.

This insight provides an important application. Many different motives may lead us to take an interest in another person. Is that interest the love that indicates that we have eternal life? Or is it a selfish interest, such as a desire for that person to take an interest in us, or a desire for others to think well of us for our charity? True love, the love that is evidence of eternal life, proceeds from recognizing that we and the ones we love have the same Father, that each of us is born again by faith in Jesus the Son of God.

The third subordinate clause (C, 2b) makes very good sense if we understand it as explaining the second verb, the first instance of “we love.” If the second subordinate clause (B, 1b) tells us **how we know** that we truly love our brethren, this one tells us **how we love** them. True love for God’s children requires us to love him first, and keep his commandments. This statement is the inverse of 4:21,

1Jn 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

There, love for God and keeping his commandments requires us to love our brethren. Now, love for our brethren requires us to love God and keep his commandments. John thus establishes an equivalence between love for God and love for his children.

The fourth subordinate clause (D, 4:3a) amplifies the second instance of “we love God” by telling us **how we love God**.

36 Here, we have the more common γνώσκω *ginōskō* G1097, to know by observation, rather than the less common οἶδα *oīda* G1492, to know by reflection.

37 See note on Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν for alternative parsings of the verse.

3b and his commandments are not grievous.—At this point, John’s readers may be uncomfortable. It’s all very warm and fuzzy to talk about loving God. But when we talk about obeying him, we become apprehensive. In 2:16, he reminded us of the challenge that the world poses to us (chart):

1Jn 2:16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

These three natural desires, for physical comfort, beauty, and a sense of self, pull us away from consistently loving the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and wealth. Every command of God that we confront challenges one or another of these three innate desires. That’s what makes obedience to God seem burdensome.

Yet John insists that it is not a heavy burden, and the last verse of this section explains why.

5:4, The Effect of Righteousness: Victory over the World

This verse is a powerful transition to the following section, which deals the third time with the sign of belief. On one hand, it is tightly connected to the righteousness section:

- Its purpose, according to the initial conjunction, “for,” is to explain why God’s commands are not grievous.³⁸
- The reference to being born of God is a keynote of the sign of righteousness, introduced in the second panel and repeated in 5:1-3.

On the other, it shares the notion of belief with the following sign of belief (5:5-12), and its emphasis on overcoming is repeated in 5:5.

4 For whatsoever is born *gennaō* [perfect] of God—Up until now, we have read of people who are born of God. Now the pronoun changes. It is no longer masculine, but neuter—not “whosoever,” but “whatsoever.” It still refers to people, but the shift in gender changes the focus.

The abstract *pan* [whatsoever], instead of the concrete *pas* [whosoever], seems to emphasise [*sic*], not the persons who conquer, but the Divine energy by which they conquer. It brings out the thought that whatsoever is of Divine origin has *ipso facto* a power mightier than the world’s.³⁹

In particular, our divine origin enables us to confront the pressure that the world brings to bear:

overcometh the world:—This is why God’s commandments are not grievous: as partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet 1:4), indwelt and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are superior to the world, and overcome it. As we saw in the second belief section,

1Jn 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have **overcome** them: because **greater is he that is in you**, than he that is in the world.

This connection of the new birth with spiritual victory repeats the point in the second instance of the sign of righteousness,

1 Jn 3:9 Whosoever is **born of God doth not commit sin**; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

38 This connection is due to Law, p. 275.

39 Law, p. 275

and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.—We are victorious over the world, and able to obey God, because we are born of him, which we know because we believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1).

Compare this with 4:4. There, we have the objective basis for our victory, God dwelling in us. Here, our faith lays hold on that fact, and acts on it. The next section will remind us that the human Jesus is the divine Son of God. He was a human being indwelt by the divine nature, and through his Spirit dwelling in us, we operate on the same spiritual architecture.

The military language suggests that John knows of Paul’s armory in Ephesians 6, where “the shield of faith” is “above all” the other weapons:

Eph 6:16 Above all, taking the **shield of faith**, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

At this point, the accuser may raise his head and say, “Aha! Look, you sinned. Yesterday, at 12:32 PM, you cut into traffic on I94. You didn’t overcome the world, so you’re not born again. You’re still mine!”

John started his book to guard against such attacks. Our struggle with sin is constant in this life, but our Lord has provided for every contingency (Table 11). The war is not over. We are daily in the midst of *Table 11: Our combat with the world* the battle. But we are assured that we are on the winning side, and we will ultimately prevail.

Reality of Sin	God's Provision
1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:	7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.
8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.	9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.	2:1 ... if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

Summary of the Sign of Righteousness

The third instance of the sign of righteousness echoes the vocabulary of the first two instances, of keeping commandments and being born of a righteous father. The new concept here is that of loving God (Table 12, chart). In the previous two panels, righteousness is imposed on us by a lawgiver, or bequeathed to us by a father. These themes are still present in the third panel (Figure 10), but now that we have learned the depth of God’s love for us in 4:7-18, the focus is on righteousness offered by us to God in gratitude for his love to us.

	2:3-6	2:29-3:10	4:19-5:4
Vocabulary	Keep, Commandments	Child, Begotten	+ Love God
God's role	Lawgiver	Father	The Object of our Love

Table 12: The Sign of Righteousness in the Three Panels

5:5-12, Belief

We will study this section with a review of its themes. then focus on the three witnesses of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, then discuss the witness of God the Father in the OT scriptures.

Main Themes

The third belief section, like the third righteousness section, combines key ideas from the first two, and adds something new (Figure 15, chart).

- The dominant theme of the first belief section is marked by the our Lord’s divine names, “son (of God)” and “Christ,” and the word “anoint,” referring to the Holy Spirit.
- The second belief section names the Spirit directly, and the Son of God.
- The third belief section retains the Spirit and the titles “Son (of God)” and “Christ,” but adds two new themes: belief (mentioned in a belief section only negatively in 4:1), and a family of words meaning “witness” or “testimony.”

The word family (μαρτυρέω *martureō* G3140, μαρτυρία *marturia* G3141) appears 12 times in the book (Figure 16).⁴⁰ The first is in the opening,

1John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we **have seen it, and bear witness**, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

The second is in the third love section:

1Jn 4:14 And we **have seen and do testify** that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

The other ten instances are all in 5:6-11, the belief section. The first two, and 5:9a (“if we receive the witness of men”), describe human witness, while the others report God’s witness.

The fundamental idea of witness or testimony is that someone a) has direct knowledge of an important fact and b) presents and defends that information the fact it is questioned. We saw this concept frequently in the Revelation. The entire book is called “the testimony (witness) of Jesus Christ” (Rev 1:2), who is himself called “the faithful and true witness” (Rev 3:14). In the third belief section, John focuses on the witness that God has given to us of fundamental spiritual truths. There is no question that he has direct knowledge of these truths, and he graciously makes them known to us. The false teachers were early examples of a category of heresy known as gnosticism, which teaches that salvation comes by gaining special, secret knowledge accessible only to a few after long initiation (and typically requiring steep fees to their teachers). Our God delights to reveal spiritual things to us. For example,

Gen 18:17 And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do;

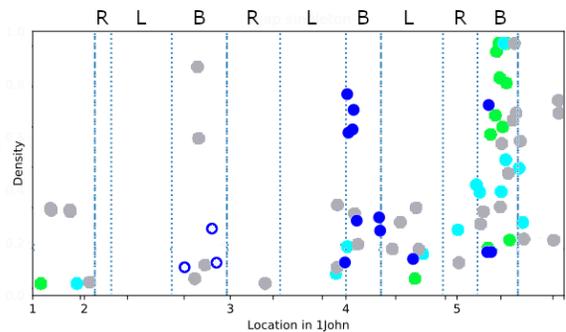


Figure 15: Son (of God) or Christ (grey), believe or belief (light blue), witness (green), anoint (hollow dark blue), spirit (dark blue)

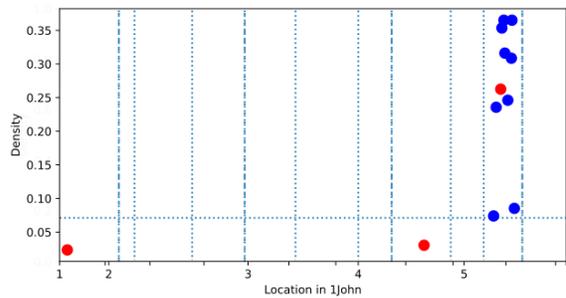


Figure 16: “Witness” in 1 John. Red: witness by men. Blue: witness by God.

⁴⁰ 3 John (23/1000 words), 1 John (6/1000), and John’s gospel (3/1000) dominate the rest of the NT, accounting for 64/139 instances of these terms.

Deu 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.

5 Who is he that **overcometh** the world, but he that **believeth** that Jesus is the **Son of God?**

—Now John returns to the central theme of the belief sections: the human Jesus is the divine Son of God. The false teachers rejected this truth. Cerinthus, John’s main adversary, taught that the divine Christ came upon the human Jesus at his baptism, and left him before his death. John insists that the two were united as a single person throughout his ministry. In this section he gives witnesses to support this central truth.

6-9, The Three Witnesses

The next three verses refer repeatedly to “water and blood” (6a, 6b, and 8, chart). The first two references describe them as past, but 6b-8 joins them with the Spirit in a present witness. The commentaries summarize many possible interpretations; we’ll consider just one.

6a, b, The Past Witness: Water and Blood

6 This is he that came [aorist ptc] by [δύ] water and blood,—John describes the Lord’s past coming by the two public events that framed it: his baptism and his crucifixion. John’s gospel, unlike Matthew or Luke, ignores the story of his birth, and begins with his baptism in the Jordan river by John. At that baptism, John declared him to be “the lamb of God,” destined for sacrifice, and the last public act of our Lord was the shedding of his blood on the cross. John records both of these. In the gospel, the Baptist confirms the first, and the Evangelist the second, with the two verbs, “saw” and “bare record.”⁴¹ The Baptist testified to his coming by water:

Jhn 1:32 And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. 33 And I knew him not: but he that sent me to **baptize with water**, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 **And I saw, and bare record** that this is the Son of God.

And the evangelist testified to his coming by blood:

Jhn 19:34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith **came there out blood and water**. 35 **And he that saw it bare record**, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

Some connect the “water and blood” of 1 John 5:6 with “blood and water” of 19:34, but the difference in order suggests that the epistle has in view the baptism as well as the sacrifice.

even Jesus Christ;—Throughout the belief sections, the messianic title “Christ,” like “Son of God,” challenges the false teaching of the antichrists. They denied the complete identity of the human Jesus and the divine Messiah. John insists that he is both.

not by [ἐν] [the] water only, but by [the] water and [the] blood.⁴²—The second reference to the water and the blood emphasizes the Lord’s dual nature at both bookends of his ministry. The particular error current in John’s day was that the divine Christ came upon the man Jesus at his

41 The same two verbs appears in 1 John 1:2, “we have seen it and bear witness.”

42 See note for differences between the second reference and the first.

baptism, but then left him before the crucifixion, so that the one who died on the cross was Jesus, but not Christ.⁴³ John insists that “Jesus Christ” participated in both events.

This truth is critical to our salvation. Jehovah had told Moses that he himself (God) would bear the sin of his people:

Exo 34:6 ... **The LORD, The LORD God**, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, 7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving [**bearing**] **iniquity and transgression and sin**, ...

To fulfill this promise, the one who died on the cross, bearing our sin, had to be both Jesus and Christ. And so Paul insists,

2Co 5:19 ... **God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself**, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

The one who redeems us is “God in Christ,” not just the man Jesus.

6c-8, The Present Witnesses

As John moves from past history to the present (chart), he starts with the work of the Spirit, then expands it with echoes of the water and the blood.

And it is the Spirit that beareth witness [present ptc], because the Spirit is truth.—The end of 5:6 advances the argument in two ways (chart).

First, to the focus on the water of baptism and the blood of the cross, it adds the Spirit. References to the Holy Spirit, either directly or through the notion of anointing, are a hallmark of the sign of belief in John (Figure 17, chart).

It is at first tempting to associate the reference of the Spirit in 5:6c with the Baptist’s testimony that he saw the Spirit descending and abiding on the Lord Jesus at his baptism. But then we would expect John to write here, “It is the Spirit that bore witness” (past tense). The second major change here is from the past tense to the present. The Spirit did indeed bear witness to the Lord at the baptism, but John has in mind something in our present experience. Consider how he refers to the Spirit in the earlier belief sections. In the first belief section, we read that the Spirit’s anointing enables us (the assembly) to know God’s truth and discern error:

1Jn 2:27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

In the second, his dwelling in us is described in terms of the gift of the Spirit:

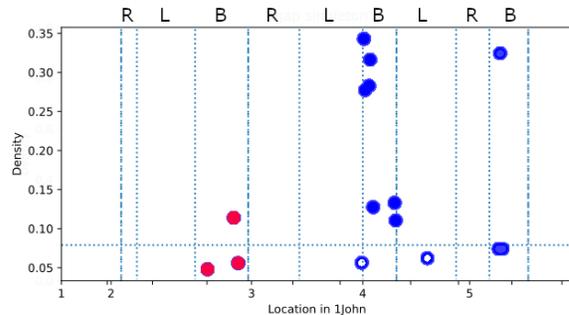


Figure 17: Anointing (red) and Spirit (blue) in 1 John. Solid points are in the belief sections of the three panels.

43 The apocryphal Acts of John records a conversation between the Christ and John in a cave on the Mount of Olives while the man Jesus is dying before “the multitude below,” <https://archive.org/stream/thegnosticcrucif35735gut/35735.txt#:~:text=1.,Lord%20Himself%20above%20the%20Cross.>

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

1Jn 4:13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

The Spirit's witness here is not his historical appearance at the Jordan River, but something in the experience of the regenerated believer. John's teaching that "the Spirit beareth witness" echoes Paul's same statement in Romans 8, in the context of the believer's walk in the Spirit:

Rom 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. 10 And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. 12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. 13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. 15 For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. 16 **The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God:** 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.

There is a third reference to water, blood, and the Spirit in 5:8b. But in the AV, this reference is separated from the first two by a description of the Father, Son, and Spirit in 7b-8a (chart).

Many people treasure this description as a summary of the NT teaching that theologians call the "Trinity": the concept that three distinct entities, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, form a single God. There is no question that *this doctrine* is true. But there are serious questions about whether *these words* were originally in what John wrote, which is why other translations lack them.

Let's first be clear about the doctrine in the NT. Here are only a few of many texts that teach it:

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the **Father**, and of the **Son**, and of the **Holy Ghost**:

1 Cor 12:4 Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same **Spirit**. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same **Lord**. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same **God** which worketh all in all.

2Co 13:14 The grace of the **Lord Jesus Christ**, and the love of **God**, and the communion of the **Holy Ghost**, be with you all. Amen.

Eph 4:4 There is one body, and one **Spirit**, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One **Lord**, one faith, one baptism, 6 One **God and Father** of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1Pe 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**, through sanctification of the **Spirit**, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of **Jesus Christ**: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

Now we turn to the text. The Greek manuscripts differ concerning the presence of these words, starting with "in heaven" in v. 7, and continuing through "in earth" in v. 8. Out of 500 Greek mss of 1 John, only 10 have these words, several of them in the margin as a later addition. The oldest is a Latin-Greek parallel Bible from 1362, and the others are all later than 1500. Various versions

of the words do occur earlier in some Latin manuscripts from Spain, and patristic writings going back to 380 contain trinitarian statements similar to what John says, though it is not clear whether they are quoting the NT or formulating the idea of the trinity independently.

The KJV was translated from the fourth edition of a printed Greek NT edited by Erasmus of Rotterdam. The first two editions of Erasmus' NT omitted these words, reflecting his focus on Greek MSS. But their popularity in defending the trinity in theological debate led to criticism of his edition, and under market pressure, he added them to later editions.

We can agree with most of what the omitted words say.⁴⁴ But the textual evidence is that they originated, not with John, but in the trinitarian debates of the first four centuries.⁴⁵ John's reference to three witnesses (the water, the blood, and the Spirit) stimulated people to think of another important triple attested elsewhere in the NT, and emphasized throughout 1 John, the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It would be natural for a reader to write a note in the margin to capture this insight. (Compare the association of comments with the text in modern study Bibles.) A later scribe thought the words were a *correction* to the text rather than a *comment*, blended them into the text, and eventually they made their way into a few Greek mss. Methodologically, we are following the majority Greek text, which does not contain these words.

7 For there are three that bear record [present ptc] in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.—John repeats his statement that the Spirit is presently bearing witness to us. But now he brings the water and the blood, which in 5:6 referred to past events, into the present along with the Spirit. We understand how the Spirit presently bears witness to us. But what role do the water and the blood play?

It is likely that the present witness of the water and the blood consists in the two memorials that our Lord has given us, and that believers have practiced from NT times on: water baptism, and the Lord's table (chart).

The connection of the blood with the Lord's table is straightforward. It is one of the two elements that we remember, and the NT emphasizes the blood as saving us:⁴⁶

1 John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and **the blood** of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

Rom 3:25 Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through **faith in his blood**, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Rom 5:9 Much more then, being now **justified by his blood**, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

1Pe 1:18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; 19 But **with the precious blood of Christ**, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

But the present relevance of the water invites more attention. Our Lord underwent John's baptism, which the NT distinguishes from Christian baptism:

44 "Witness in heaven" is puzzling: "witness" is something that happens on earth, attesting some heavenly truth.

45 See Brown's appendix for a thorough discussion.

46 Heb 10:19-23 mentions his body as well, but describing how he entered heaven, not how we are saved; see https://cyber-chapel.org/sermons/hebrews/notes/Heb_8thru10a.pdf

Act 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the **baptism of repentance**, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. 5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

But the difference is subtle. John's baptism, like similar Jewish rituals, emphasized repentance and the symbolism of cleansing. Repentance is still part of the gospel, and in Christian baptism, a person is acknowledging their sin. But they are also declaring what John's baptism could not, that the redeemer has died and risen, and they are now sharing in his finished work. So it is not inappropriate for us to see Christian baptism as a completion and fulfillment of the promise of John's baptism, recognizing the finished work of the Lamb of God whom he introduced.

9-12, The Foundation: The Witness of God

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater:—We have noted that a distinctive mark of the third belief section is a shift from the witness of men to the witness of God (Figure 16). John started his book by reporting his own witness (chart) :

1John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we **have seen it, and bear witness**, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

Again, in the third love section:

1Jn 4:14 And we **have seen and do testify** that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

His readers have received his witness. That is why his epistle is credible to them. But the three examples John has given, the water, the blood, and the Spirit, are superior to his own witness, and in fact the greatest witness of all is the witness of God:

for this is the witness of God which he hath testified [perfect] of his Son.—The phrase “this is the witness of God” is anticipating the same clause in 5:11, “this is the record” (literally, “this is the witness”). There, we will learn *what* God testified of his Son. But first we should ask, *when* and *how* did God testify of his Son? John writes that God “hath testified,” using the Greek perfect tense to describe action completed in the past, but with present effect.

John is probably recalling the chain of witnesses, culminating in the witness of the Father, from the Lord's teaching in John 5. There, the Jews were questioning the very point that the false teachers were challenging, that Jesus is the Son of God:

Jhn 5:18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

In response, the Lord declares the authority that the Father has given him (5:19-29), and then gives a list of witnesses to substantiate his claims (5:31-39). Note the close parallel with the series of witnesses in 1 John 5 (Table 13).

First, he discusses the witness of men, including (from the perspective of his adversaries) his own witness (John 5:31). John the Baptist also bore witness to him (John 5:32-33). The Baptist's

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

John 5	1 John 5
31 If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. 32 There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true. 33 Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth. 34 But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. 35 He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.	9 If we receive the witness of men 6 this is he that came by water ...
36 But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.	9 greater witness 6 not by water only, but by water and blood
37 And the Father himself , which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me . Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. 38 And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. 39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.	9 this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son

Table 13: Alignment of the witnesses of 1 John 5:6-12 and John 5:31-39

witness, like that of the Evangelist, is the witness of men. It is associated with the Lord’s baptism, the “water” of 1 John 5:6.

John 5:36 and 1 John 5:9 both promise a “greater” witness than that of men. In the gospel, this witness is the Lord’s works. These culminate in his supreme act of obedience to the Father, when he died on the cross, the witness of the blood in 1 John.

Finally, in both John and 1 John, the Lord appeals to the Father. In John 5, the Father’s testimony is contained in the Scriptures,⁴⁷ which during our Lord’s earthly life would be the books of the Old Testament. The parallel suggests that John has the same testimony in view in 1 John 5.

In both John 5 and 1 John 5, we have

- a comparison of the witness of men with that of God;
- the idea of a “greater witness”; and
- The Father’s witness as the culmination of a chain of witnesses

These parallels encourage us, once again, to interpret the epistle on the basis of the gospel.

5:6-9 tell us *how* and *when* the testimony that Jesus is Christ came to men. 5:9, “God has testified,” uses the perfect tense to point us back to the OT Scriptures, to which our Lord referred in John 5. Table 14 summarizes the witnesses in chronological order (chart):

1. First are the OT scriptures, the witness of God the Father, given before the birth of our Lord.
2. Next, we have the Lord’s public ministry, the witness of God the Son, bracketed between his baptism by John in the waters of Jordan and the shedding of his blood on Calvary.
3. Finally, since Pentecost, God the Spirit, and the symbols of water baptism and the Lord’s table, bear ongoing witness.

It is interesting that these three phases focus respectively on the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. It is not surprising that early believers found their minds drawn to the nature of the Godhead when they meditated on this passage.⁴⁸

47 Alternatively, the Scriptures are the last witness in the series, but then they would be even more important than the Father, which is not likely what the Lord meant (cf. John 10:29).

48 The observation of the trinity in this progression is due to Westcott.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

Before John tells us *what* God has testified concerning his Son, he reminds us of our responsibility to respond in faith to this testimony. This is the high point of the Greek words for faith and belief⁴⁹ in 1 John (Figure 18, chart).⁵⁰

Textual Order



Reference in 1 John 5	9-11 he hath testified (perfect tense)	6a,b he that came (aorist past tense)	6b-8 beareth (present tense)
How is the witness given?	God through OT Scriptures	Water: Jordan Blood: Calvary	Spirit Water: Baptism Blood: Lord's Table
When was the witness given?	Before birth of the Lord	The Lord's Public Ministry	From Pentecost to the Present
Who bears the witness?	The Father	The Son	The Spirit
Counterpart in John 5	37-39 the Father ... search the scriptures	31-35 John the Baptist 36 the works that I do	(not mentioned in John 5)

Chronological Order



It is important to recognize that John exhorts us to

Table 14: Chronological order of the witnesses

believe before he tells us the greatest witness. We do not believe because we have evaluated and approved the revelation. Our belief is first on the Lord Jesus, not on a specific dogma. Compare our Lord's words to Martha at the tomb of Lazarus:

John 11:40, If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself:—Here is yet another parallel to our Lord's words in John 5. In John 5:38, he told the Jews, "ye have not his word abiding in you." Under the Old Covenant, God's people did not enjoy the permanent indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, but they were encouraged to memorize and meditate on God's written word:

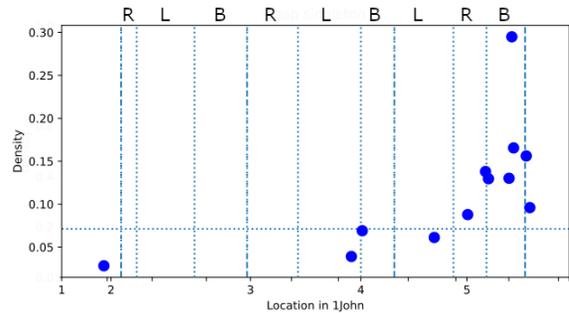


Figure 18: Words for believe, faith, and faithful in 1 John

Deu 6:6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be **in thine heart**:

Deu 11:18 Therefore shall ye lay up these my words **in your heart** and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.

Psa 119:11 Thy word have I hid **in mine heart**, that I might not sin against thee.

The Lord promises Ezekiel that under the new covenant, God's very *Spirit* dwells within us (cf. Acts 5:32):

Ezk 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them.

49 Faithful (πιστός *pistos* G4103), believe (πιστεύω *pisteuō* G4100), faith (πίστις *pistis* G4102)

50 He commands our faith before he states the content. We do not believe because we have evaluated and approved the revelation. Our belief is first on him, not on a specific dogma. Compare the order in John 11:40, "If thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God."

But when he reveals this covenant to Jeremiah, he describes this inner renewal as writing his *law* in the heart:

Jer 31:33 But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put **my law** in their inward parts, and write it **in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

The Jews who opposed our Lord did not recognize his authority because they did not have God's word within them. We are able to recognize him because we have the witness in us—the witness of the Holy Spirit (1 John 5:6c, It is the Spirit that beareth witness).

he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record [witness] that God gave of his Son.—According to John 5, the witness of God is his word, the Scripture. If we choose to reject that testimony, we are calling God a liar. This verse recalls John's discussion of how to deal with personal sin in chapter 1:

1Jn 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, **we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

Again, God's voice is heard in his word. In chapter 1, his word reveals our sin. Here, it reveals his Son. In both cases, to reject God's word is to accuse him of lying.

11 And this is the record [witness],—After this digression on our response to the witness, John now returns to the witness of God. In 5:9, he told us that God himself had borne witness to his Son, and by parallels with John 5, he identified that witness with the Scriptures. Now, repeating 5:9 (“this is the witness”), he summarizes *what* God has witnessed concerning his Son.

that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.—The central message is what he announced at the start of the epistle (chart):

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that **eternal life**, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1:2 is the first reference to “eternal life” in the book, and identifies it with the Messiah in his eternal relation with the Father. We have often recalled the Lord's own definition of eternal life,

Jhn 17:3 And this is **life eternal**, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

Eternal life is knowing God, dwelling in him and he in us. John claims that God's witness in the OT leads to two conclusions:

1. God has given us eternal life.
2. This life is associated with his son.

Let's consider these one at a time.

God hath given to us eternal life,—First, the OT teaches that there is eternal life available to men. Paul acknowledges this to Titus:

Titus 1:2 In hope of **eternal life**, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;

In patriarchal times, Job recognized that there is hope for life beyond the grave:

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

Job 19:25 For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: 26 And though after my skin worms destroy this body, **yet in my flesh shall I see God:** 27 Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.

During the ascendancy of Assyria, God declared through Isaiah,

Isa 26:19 **Thy dead men shall live**, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.

And after the return of the captives from Babylon, he told Daniel,

Dan 12:2 And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, **some to everlasting life**, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

So, as John says, God in his OT scripture has promised the gift of eternal life. The second topic that he claims God has witnessed is that “this life is in his Son.” Where is this revelation?

this life is in his Son.—The idea of God’s Son is intimately tied up with his covenant with David, to whom he promised through Nathan (chart),

2Sa 7:12 And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. 13 He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever. 14 **I will be his father, and he shall be my son.** (cf. Psa 2:7; Psa 89:26-27).

According to this promise, the Son of God would build up God’s house. But where do we read that he gives life to his people?

John may have in mind Isaiah’s Servant Songs, which describe someone whom God calls “my servant” (Figure 19). Sometimes the servant is clearly the nation Israel, but then it narrows down to describe the Messiah, most notably in the final song, Isaiah 53. Finally, in Isaiah 54-66, “servants” (plural) comes to describe God’s faithful people.

These songs present the Messiah, not in his royal aspect as king, but as one who *suffers* in order to *save* his people. Consider these examples:

Mat 12:15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; 16 And **charged them that they should not make him known:** 17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying [42:1-4], 18 Behold **my servant ὁ παῖς μου**, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles. 19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. 20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. 21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

Isa 42:6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 **To open**

Israel													
Messiah													
Church													
Israel	x		x		x	x	x	x	x				
Messiah	x	x		x					x	x	x	x	
Church		x							x	x		x	
	Servant Mostly Israel								Servant Mostly Messiah				

Figure 19: The Servant of the Lord in Isaiah

the blind eyes, **to bring out** the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Isa 49:4 Then I said, **I have laboured in vain**, I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain: yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my work with my God. 5 And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be **his servant δοῦλον ἑαυτοῦ**, to bring Jacob again to him, Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious in the eyes of the LORD, and my God shall be my strength. 6 And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be **my servant παιδά μου** to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, **that thou mayest be my salvation** unto the end of the earth.

Isa 50:5 The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. 6 **I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting.**

Isa 53:3 He is **despised and rejected** of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath **borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows**: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But **he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.** 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and **the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

In these passages, God frequently speaks of “my servant.” The Hebrew word for “servant” is עֶבֶד (*ʿebed* H5650) (chart). In general, the LXX tends to use two words to translate this word (see note): δοῦλος (*doulos* G1401), the word Paul uses when he calls himself a “servant of Jesus Christ,” and παῖς (*pais* G3816). *Pais* means first of all a young child, then one’s own offspring (“son”), and then a servant. The early believers used it to refer to our Lord:

Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy **child** Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

Throughout the OT, these two translations appear equally often. But in the Servant Songs, *ʿebed* is translated almost exclusively by *pais*. To a Greek-speaking Jew like John, the one whom Isaiah promised as the suffering deliverer is “the child of God.” Or, as John claims, “this life is in his Son.”

Why does John call him “son of God” when his LXX Isaiah calls him “child of God”? The answer probably lies in recognizing the two phases of our Savior’s ministry from Php 2:6-11—his humiliation and his glorification. Table 15 shows several contrasts between these.⁵¹

“Son” (υἱός *huios* G5207) is a more exalted title than “child,” reflecting a more mature offspring who has entered into special privileges (Gal 4:1-5). Our Lord’s position as the exalted Son of God is most in focus after his resurrection. During his years of humiliation, he was reluctant to offer this title directly. He claimed God as his Father, a relation appropriate both to a child and to a son. Like the name “Jesus” without a title, *pais* is appropriate to this period, which is the focus of the servant songs. Now that he is exalted, we rejoice with John in the full glory of his title, “Son.” But we still remember his humiliation as the slain Lamb. And the Greek translator of

51 For the Jewish expectation, see D. Mitchell, *Messiah ben Joseph*. Newton Mearns, Scotland: Campbell, 2016.

	Humiliation	Glorification
Summary in Philippians 2	5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.	9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
Jewish Expectation	Messiah the Son of Joseph	Messiah the Son of David
Scripture	Gospels	Epistles
Name	Jesus (without titles)	Jesus + Lord, Savior, Christ
Relation to the Father	My servant/child <i>pais</i>	Son <i>huios</i>

Table 15: The Two Phases of Messiah's Ministry

Isaiah reminds us that it was as the humble child of God that he bore our sins and carried our sorrows. This eternal life comes to us through the one we now know as God's Son, who died for us as his humble child.

12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—What does it mean to “have the Son”? The usual condition for eternal life in John's writings (see note) is belief. Note in particular the parallel between this verse and John 3:36 (chart),

John 3:36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The solution probably lies in John's favorite theme of abiding, derived from the Lord Jesus' exhortation in the Upper Room, “Abide in me, and I in you” (John 15:4). To have the Son is to enjoy his indwelling presence, through the Holy Spirit (1 John 3:24). John actually links the two concepts of believing and abiding:

1Jn 4:15 Whosoever shall **confess** that Jesus is the Son of God, **God dwelleth in him, and he in God.**

By itself, the concept of life coming through belief is liable to the misinterpretation that mental assent can bring salvation. Salvation is having God living in us, and is the result of a faith engendered by the Holy Spirit, but absent in the case of an intellectual assent.

Perhaps this is why John states in the prolog to his gospel,

Jhn 1:12 But as many as **received** him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Salvation is not just a matter of believing facts, but receiving a person. Compare the situation of a young man and a young woman who have been friends for several years. She believes a great deal about him: who his parents are, what his job is, what his interests are. But she has not

received him until he proposes and she accepts. Then she can say that she has him. Believing facts about the Lord Jesus does not save him. We must receive him, so that we have him.

Summary of the Sign of Belief

As with the signs of Righteousness and Love, we can trace the development of the sign of Belief through the three panels (Table 16, chart).

The first two panels introduce the spiritual nature of belief, referring in the first to the anointing that believers have from God, and in the second explicitly to the teaching work of the Holy Spirit and the deceptive work of false spirits. Both of them concentrate references to Jesus as Christ and Son of God. The third panel retains these marks, but adds two key verbs: witness (by God to us), and belief (how we respond to that witness).

The key doctrine is consistent across the three panels: the man Jesus is the divine Christ, the Son of God.

There is an interesting progression in the evidence for belief that John gives as

we move through the panels. In all three cases it is related to the assembly of believers.

In the first panel, the focus is on the false teachers who have left the assembly, and the evidence is continuing to abide in the assembly:

1Jn 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

In the second panel, the evidence is “hearing us.”

1Jn 4:6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

The pronouns here are important to John’s meaning. The opening verses of the epistle help us understand their meaning:

1Jn 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which **we** have heard, which **we** have seen with **our** eyes, which **we** have looked upon, and **our** hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and **we** have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto **you** that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto **us**;) 3 That which **we** have seen and heard declare we unto **you**, that **ye** also may have fellowship with **us**: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write **we** unto **you**, that your joy may be full.

Note the distinction between “we” (those who had first-hand knowledge of the Lord Jesus) and “you” (the second-generation, gentile believers to whom John ministered). This opening

	2:18-28	4:1-6	5:5-12
Vocabulary	Anointing, Abide Christ, Son (of God)	Spirit(s) Son (of God)	+Witness, Belief
Key Doctrine	Jesus = Christ; Father and Son	Jesus Christ is come in the flesh	Jesus is the Son of God
Evidence	19 Abiding (in Christ, and in the assembly)	6 Hearing those who are of God (the apostles)	7-8 Testimony of the Spirit, baptism, and the Lord’s Table

Table 16: The Sign of Belief in the Three Panels

suggests we should usually understand “we” throughout the epistle, not as including the recipients, but as referring to the apostles.⁵² In this case, the evidence in the second panel is reception of their authoritative teaching. We can recognize those who hold the truth by whether they receive the testimony of the apostles

In the third panel, the evidence is the testimony that God has provided. In the present day, this testimony is first the Spirit, which dwells within the believers, but John also reminds them of their corporate memorials of the Lord in baptism and the Lord’s table:

1Jn 5:7 For there are three that bear record, 8 the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

In all three cases, the sign of belief involves the believer’s relation to the assembly of the saints.

Summary of the Body of the Book

We have now completed the main body of the book, which has been supporting John’s overall purpose:

1Jn 5:13 **These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.**

Contrast this with the purpose of his gospel:

Jhn 20:31 **But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.**

He is still focused on life that comes through belief, but now John explains how we know that our faith has in fact produced life.

John has given three signs that a person has eternal life, and to make sure we get the point, he repeats them three times (Figure 20). We call these sections “panels” to emphasize the parallelism across them. The three signs are:

- Righteousness, living consistently with God’s nature as revealed in his commands
- Love for other believers
- Belief that the man Jesus is the divine Christ, the Son of God.

The emphasis on these signs varies as we move through the book (Figure 1, repeated in Figure 21), shown by the space devoted to each sign.

The sign of love receives the most space overall, and in the third panel, it moves to the front. This emphasis reflects the history of the assembly. They have recently been torn by divisive

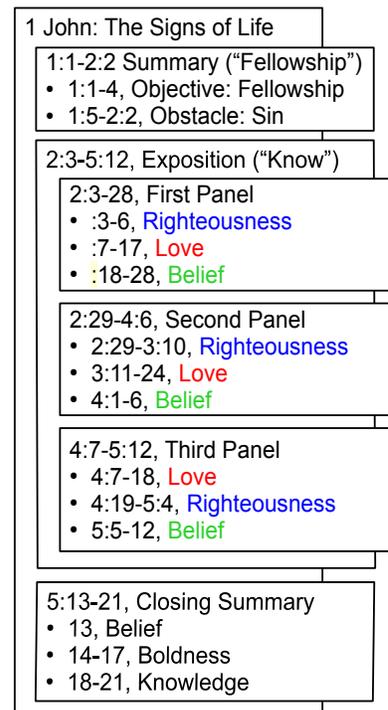


Figure 20: Overall Structure of 1 John

⁵² There are possible exceptions: 1:3, “our fellowship,” may be inclusive of the recipients; 2:19 appears to refer to the assembly (including John); 4:16, “we have known and believed,” also (though perhaps even here John is setting himself and the apostles forth as an example). Certainly “us” in 5:11 (“God hath given to us eternal life”) is inclusive, and in the prayer promise of 5:14-15.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

teaching that has led to a painful split. In such a climate, it is easy to be suspicious and critical of one another. John repeatedly reminds them of the Lord's new commandment in the upper room,

Jhn 13:34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

The first panel gets the most teaching of the three on the sign of belief gets the most space, discussing the departure of the false teachers.

The second panel contains the most teaching of the three on righteousness, emphasizing that our righteousness is not outward obedience to his commands (as in the first panel), but the organic result of our being the children of God.

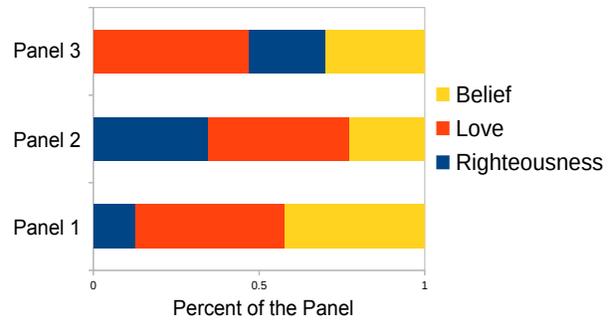


Figure 21: Order and Emphasis of the Signs in Each Panel

Notes

Who Loves Whom?

Nouns:

1John 2:5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the **love of God** perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

1John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the **love of the Father** is not in him.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of **love** the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1John 3:16 Hereby perceive we the **love of God**, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1John 3:17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the **love of God** in him?

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for **love** is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is **love**.

1John 4:9 In this was manifested the **love of God** toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

1John 4:10 Herein is **love**, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and **his love** is perfected in us.

1John 4:16 And we have known and believed the **love** that God hath to us. God is **love**; and he that dwelleth in **love** dwelleth in God, and God in him.

1John 4:17 Herein is our **love** made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in **love**; but perfect **love** casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in **love**.

1John 5:3 For this is the **love of God**, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

We love our brothers

1John 2:10 He that **loveth his brother** abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

1John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that **loveth not his brother**.

1John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should **love one another**.

1John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we **love the brethren**. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

1John 3:18 My little children, let us not **love** in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

1John 3:23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and **love one another**, as he gave us commandment.

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us **love one another**: for love is of God; and every one that **loveth** is born of God, and knoweth God.

1John 4:8 He that **loveth** not knoweth not God; for God is love.

1John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to **love one another**.

1John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we **love one another**, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1John 4:20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that **loveth not his brother** whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

1John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God **love his brother also**.

1John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat **loveth him also that is begotten of him**.

1John 5:2 By this we know that we **love the children of God**, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

God loves us

1John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for **love is of God**; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

1John 4:8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for **God is love**.

1John 4:10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that **he loved us**, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1John 4:11 Beloved, if **God so loved us**, we ought also to love one another.

1John 4:12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and **his love** is perfected in us.

1John 4:19 We love him, because **he first loved us**.

We love God

1John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, **the love of the Father** is not in him.

1John 4:10 Herein is love, not that **we loved God**, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1John 4:19 **We love him**, because he first loved us.

1John 4:20 If a man say, **I love God**, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he **love God** whom he hath not seen?

1John 4:21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who **loveth God** love his brother also.

1John 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that **loveth him that begat** loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1John 5:2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when **we love God**, and keep his commandments.

Love for the World

1John 2:15 **Love not the world**, neither the things that are in the world. If any man **love the world**, the love of the Father is not in him.

Different Characterizations of Salvation

The condition of God's people is described in several different ways in the NT:

- A) being born again, having new life (John 3:3-8)
- B) having eternal life (John 3:16)
- C) knowing God (John 17:3).

Can we identify these?

John 17:3 identifies B and C:

Jhn 17:3 And this is **life eternal**, that they might **know thee** the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 John 4:7 identifies the new birth and knowing God:

1Jn 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is **born of God, and knoweth God**.

The identity of the new birth and eternal life is suggested in 1 Peter,

1Pe 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath **begotten us again** unto a **lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 To an inheritance **incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away**, reserved in heaven for you, 5 Who are **kept by the power of God** through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

What is Manifested in 1 John?

The word family (φανερός *faneros* G5318, φανερώω *faneroō* G5319) is denser in this book (4.65/1000 words, 10 out of 69 instances in the NT) than in any other. The last instance is 4:9, manifesting the Love of God. What else is manifested?

The Lord at his First Coming

1John 1:2 (For **the life was manifested**, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was **manifested** unto us;)

1John 3:5 And ye know that **he was manifested** to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the **Son of God was manifested**, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

1John 4:9 In this was **manifested the love** of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

People in this Present Age

The False Teachers

1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that **they might be made manifest** that they were not all of us.

Believers

1John 3:10 In this **the children of God are manifest**, and **the children of the devil**: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

The Lord and his People at his Second Coming

1John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when **he shall appear**, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

Believers when He Returns

1John 3:2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet **appear what we shall be**: but we know that, **when he shall appear**, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν

What do we know, and what reveals it to us? Table 17 summarizes the data in 1 John. The last column gives the interpretation of Leady-Koivisto (the Bibleworks and Accordance diagrams), and of Robert Law.

The core structure is preceding clause (C0) + ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν + complement clause (C1) + optional subordinate clause (C2). The question is whether τούτῳ refers back to C0, or forward to C2.

When C2 is missing (2:5; 3:19), τούτῳ must refer back. So we know that backward reference is possible. But if C2 is present, it could fill three different slots:

1. Epexegetical to τούτῳ, which would then look forward.
2. Extending C1 conjunctively.
3. Modifying C1.

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

Ref	Evidence	Object	Add'l Clause	Notes (see below)	Epex?
2:3	Keep his commandments	We have known (pf) him	If we keep his commandments	Epexegetical, sign of rtness	LK, Law
2:5	Keep his words	We are in him	(none)	τούτῳ looks back to sign of rtness	Law
3:16	He laid down his life	Love	That he laid down his life for us	Epexegetical	LK, Law
3:19	Love in deed and truth	We are of the truth	And shall assure our hearts (double object)	τούτῳ looks back to sign of love	LK
3:24	Keep his commandments	He abideth in us	From the Spirit which he has given us	τούτῳ looks back to sign of rtness	LK
4:13	We love one another	Reciprocal abiding; HS (double ὅτι)	2 nd ὅτι	τούτῳ looks back to sign of love	LK
5:2	We love God and keep his commandments	We love God's children	When we love God and keep his commandments	τούτῳ looks back to sign of love	LK

Table 17: What we know and how we know it in 1 John

Consider the C2 cases one by one.

1John 2:2 καὶ αὐτὸς ἰλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν· οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου. 3 Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

I don't see how ἐν τούτῳ can possibly look back. This has to be epexegetical.

Law (p. 210) takes 2:5 as epexegetical, amplified by "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."

WALKING IN THE LIGHT.

2:3.4 We know God.

2:5a The love of God is perfected in us.

2:5b-6 We abide in Him.

THE TEST.

That we keep His Commandments.

That we keep His word.

That we walk even as Christ walked.

His entire exposition of 2:3-6 is helpful (Table 18):

The paragraph contains a threefold statement both of the matter to be tested and of the test appropriate to it, and of both on an ascending scale.

1John 3:15 Πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστίν· καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν ἑαυτῷ μένουσαν. 16 Ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκεν· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς τιθέναι.

The preceding verse gives no coherent reason for the conclusion. This is also epexegetical.

1John 3:18 Τεκνία μου, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μηδὲ τῇ γλώσσει, ἀλλ' ἐν ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ. 19 Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμέν, καὶ ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας

ἡμῶν, 20 ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκη ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν, καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

Note the double object clause to εἶπ.

Leedy-Koivisto take v. 20 as exegetical to εἶπ. But 3:18 would also be a coherent referent. True love gives us a basis for knowledge. This has the advantage of citing one of John's three signs as the basis for our knowledge, aligning with the theme of the book (per Law). Law also reads this verse as looking back:

But in our own particular case this must be established by the fact that we "love not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."

1John 3:24 Καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ. Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

Leedy-Koivisto take as exegetical, but this leaves us with competing explanations for how we know of the abiding: is it because we keep his commandments (24), or because of some yet-undefined witness of the Spirit (25)? Satisfying the preceding sign would give a good basis, and C2 would then describe how he dwells in us. This is another case where retrospective εἶπ is citing one of the signs.

Law, p. 198:

That God abides in us is certified---(a) by our keeping His commandments (3:24a);

1John 4:12 θεὸν οὐδεὶς πρόποτε τεθέαται· ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν. 13 Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν.

L-K exegetical, but again, this gives us two conflicting explanations of the abiding. If εἶπ refers back to ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, then v. 13 reinforces it (again with a sign) and C2 goes on to explain how this abiding is implemented.

Law, p. 198 again:

That God abides in us is certified ... by our loving one another (4:12);

1John 5:1 Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστός, ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται· καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννησάντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ. 2 Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν, καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

L-K exegetical. Alternatively, εἶπ refers back to the argument of 5:1, and C2 relates loving God and keeping his commandments to loving our brethren (a sign), balancing 4:21.

When the preceding clauses deal with one of the signs, it makes sense to understand εἶπ as looking back, and it also avoids contradictory statements as in 3:25 and 4:13. The result of this analysis is to prefer retrospective reference of εἶπ wherever possible.

LXX Correspondents for μένω

No clear OT parallel:

	בשׂ	גמג	קום	כח	הק hope		Total
μένω	4	15	10	4	4		80

Total	1089	524	627	14	47			

The Context of John 6:56

Figure 22 shows the overall structure of John 6.

The chapter begins with the feeding of the 5000 in a remote area, far from any town where the disciples could purchase food for the multitude (6:5). The Lord miraculously multiplies five loaves and two fishes to feed the multitude. Then they return to Capernaum—the disciples in the boat, the Lord walking on the water.

Back in Capernaum, the Lord speaks extensively about the spiritual significance of the miracle. This explanations section is often called the “bread of life discourse,” but it is critical to recognize that it actually records three discourses, to different groups.

First, the people recall an earlier episode in Israel’s history when God feed the nation in the wilderness. They remind the Lord of the manna that God gave Moses in the wilderness, and ask the Lord Jesus to feed them continually.

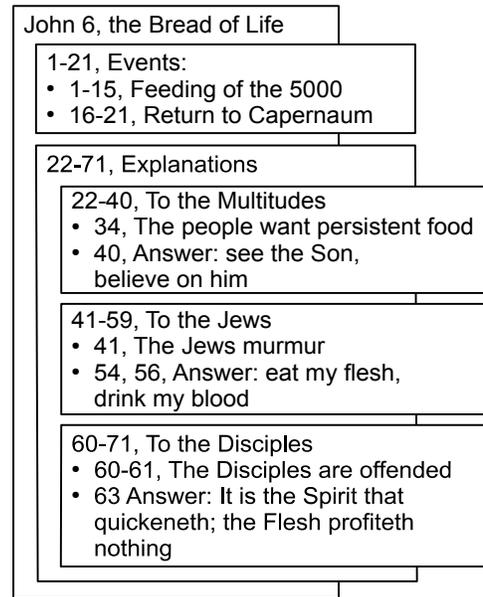


Figure 22: Structure of John 6

Jhn 6:34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

He responds that they do not need physical bread. Faith in him will sustain them eternally:

Jhn 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that **cometh** to me shall never hunger; and he that **believeth** on me shall never thirst. . . . 40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which **seeth** the Son, and **believeth** on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

In John 6:41, the audience changes, and its attitude.

Jhn 6:41 The **Jews** then **murmured** at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.

The multitudes have compared themselves to Israel in the wilderness, and the loaves and fishes to the miraculous manna. The wilderness experience was marked, not only by regular manna, but also by recurrent murmuring, and now the Lord turns from the hungry multitude to the complaining Jews. Again, he offers eternal life. But now the condition has changed:

Jhn 6:54 Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

Instead of coming to Christ and believing on him, they must eat his flesh and drink his blood. Later, he describes reciprocal abiding as depending on the same condition:

John 6:56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, **dwelleth in me, and I in him.**

This is not the first time the Lord has spoken to the Jews. Earlier, he promised them eternal life on the same terms as he has to the multitude:

Jhn 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, **He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me**, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

These earlier words were spoken specifically to the Jews, after he healed the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda. Come to me. Hear my word. Believe. But the Jews, even in the face of another dramatic miracle, murmur, and the Lord shifts to an obscure figure of speech, about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. His strategy here is the same as in Matthew’s gospel, where he teaches at first openly and clearly (5-7, the Sermon on the Mount), but then, after repeated rejections (ch. 12), shifts into parables to conceal the truth from those whose hearts are hardened.

What is the meaning of the parable? What does it mean to eat Christ’s flesh and drink his blood? It is to come to him and believe on him (6:35, 40). It is to hear his word and receive it (5:24).

We have had one discourse with the multitudes, and a second with the murmuring Jews. The chapter ends with a third, a private discussion with the apostles. They are shocked with the Lord’s words about eating his flesh and drinking his blood. He corrects their misunderstanding with a rebuke that ought to put an end to papist abuse of these verses:

Jhn 6:63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

The point is not cannibalism. It is “the words that I speak unto you,” as he had already told the Jews in 5:24. These are the key to eternal life, and (6:56) reciprocal indwelling.

Grammatical Structure of 3:24

Figure 23 shows a more detailed diagram of the structure of 3:24, with the proposed attachment of “by the Spirit” to “abideth” rather than “hereby.”

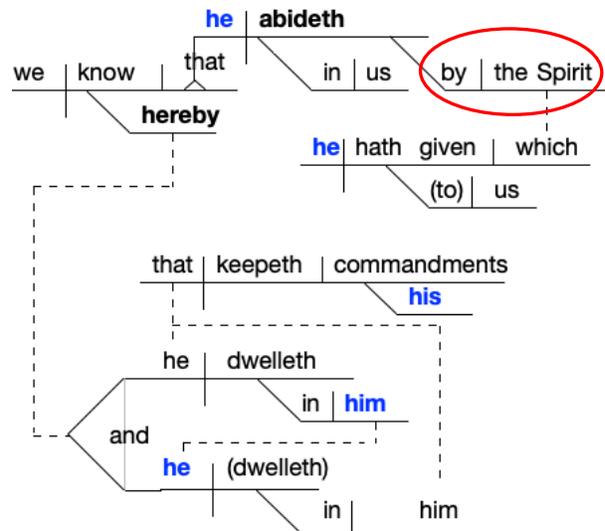


Figure 23: Grammar of 3:24

ὅτι

with Verbs of Mental Activity

Noack’s article on 2:12-14

74 instances of ὅτι in 1 John

Instances of ὅτι that seem unmistakably causal:

1John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 **For** all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

1John 3:1 ¶ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that ἵνα we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, **because** it knew him not. (or a restatement: the world knows us not, that is, it knows him not)

1John 3:8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; **for** the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Check further instances

Hypothesis: governed by a verb of mental activity (saying, knowing, manifesting) or a verbal noun derived from such a verb, ὅτι should be understood to describe the content of the verbal activity, not its cause, and translated simply “that.”

modifying causal clauses (4:17)

Note other instances of causal particle followed by ὅτι

1John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, **that** ἵνα they might be made manifest **that** ὅτι they were not all of us.

1John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: **therefore** Διὰ τοῦτο the world knoweth us not, **because** ὅτι it knew him not. [that is, it knows him not]

1John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; **that** ἵνα ye may know **that** ὅτι ye have eternal life, and **that** ἵνα ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

Fear and Love

1 John 4:18 asserts that love and fear are incompatible.

1John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

But Moses seems to disagree:

Deut. 10:12 And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to **fear** the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to **love** him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

Other passages that name the two together seem to have different objects in view, and Peter at least thinks we should fear God:

1Pet. 2:17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

Paul also:

Rom. 3:18 There is **no fear of God** before their eyes. *condemned*

2Cor. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the **fear of God**.

Eph. 5:21 Submitting yourselves one to another in the **fear of God**.

Phil. 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation **with fear and trembling**.

Fear in 2 Tim 1:7 is probably of our adversaries:

2Tim. 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

Compare:

Php 1:28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God.

Torment (κόλασις kolasis G2851)

The use of the word in the Olivet Discourse seems our best guide to rendering it “punishment” in 1 John 4:18. But it is worth noting that Ezekiel uses it repeatedly to translate “stumblingblock,” in the context of idolatry:

Ezek. 14:3 Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their heart, and put the **stumblingblock** of their iniquity before their face: should I be enquired of at all by them?

Ezek. 14:4 Therefore speak unto them, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Every man of the house of Israel that setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the **stumblingblock** of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to the prophet; I the LORD will answer him that cometh according to the multitude of his idols;

Ezek. 14:7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the **stumblingblock** of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the LORD will answer him by myself:

Ezek. 18:30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, saith the Lord GOD. Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your **ruin** למכשול עון.

Ezek. 44:12 Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel **to fall into** iniquity למכשול עון; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord GOD, and they shall bear their iniquity.

How else is מכשול, which appears 14x in MT, translated in the LXX? Only singletons. Likewise for κόλασις, which appears 15x.

The Objects of Judgment κρίσις krisis G2920

Throughout the NT, the noun is never applied to believers, and there are indications that we will not experience it.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and **shall not come into condemnation krisis**; but is passed from death unto life.

John 5:28 Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, 29 And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of **damnation krisis**.

2Pet. 2:9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of **judgment krisis** to be punished:

The last judgment is specifically addressed to the world:

John 12:31 Now is the **judgment of this world**: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

How about the cognate verb, κρίνω *krinō* G2919?

Addressed to the world:

Acts 17:31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will **judge the world οἰκουμένην** in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Rom. 3:6 God forbid: for then how shall God **judge the world**?

We are judges, not the defendants, at this judgment:

1Cor. 6:2 Do ye not know that **the saints shall judge the world**? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Perhaps derived from this saying and parallels,

Matt. 19:28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, **judging** the twelve tribes of Israel. [Lk 22:30]

Possible exceptions: believers are spoken of as being judged

James 2:12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be **judged** by the law of liberty.

James 5:9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the **judge** standeth before the door.

1Pet. 1:17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons **judgeth** according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

1Cor. 11:31 For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. 32 But when we are **judged**, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

Heb. 10:30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall **judge** his people.

2Tim. 4:1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall **judge** the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

The usual resolution is to refer these to a distinct judgment, called the βῆμα *bēma* G968:

Rom. 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the **judgment seat** of Christ.

Tabular Comparison of the Love Sections

We separate out the assurance sections.

Expositions of Love

1 John 2:7-11, 15-17	1 John 3:11-17	1 John 4:7-16
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The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

<p>7 Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning.</p> <p>The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. 8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. 9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. 10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. 11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.</p> <p>15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.</p>	<p>11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.</p> <p>12 Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous. 13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. 14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. 15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.</p> <p>16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?</p>	<p>7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. 8 He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. 9 In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. 10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.</p> <p>11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. 13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. 14 And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. 16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.</p>
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Assurances

1 John 2:12-17	1 John 3:18-24	1 John 4:17-18
<p>12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father. 14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have</p>	<p>18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. 19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. 20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. 22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. 23 And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24 And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.</p>	<p>17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.</p>

overcome the wicked one.		
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5:1 and the Order of Salvation

Both this verse and John 1:13 describe belief in the present tense, while the begetting is in a past tense (aorist in John 1:13; perfect in 1 John 5:1). These tenses support the conclusion that the new birth precedes faith, which is consistent with 1 Cor 2:14, “the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,” and John 6:44, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” Faith, in turn, brings new life: John 20:31 (“that believing, ye might have life through his name”) and 1 Tim 1:16 (“believe on him to life everlasting”). So the overall order is new birth → faith → life.

Classification of 5:4

This verse is transitional between the righteousness and belief sections. The reference to birth clearly belongs to 5:1-3, and its strong parallels to the second righteousness section. But 5:5, which shares with 5:4 the reference to faith and overcoming the world, clearly introduces the belief section.

There are three options for the connection of 5:4:

1. A hinge, independent of the units on either side
2. The final verse in the righteousness section, describing the outcome of righteousness, with parallels to the following belief section as linked keywords.
3. The initial verse in the third belief section, with parallels to the preceding righteousness section as linked keywords.

The initial particle ὄτι favors option 2, by explicitly connecting it to the preceding text. 5:5 has no such connection.

Tabular Comparison of the Righteousness Sections

2:3-6	2:29-3:10	4:19-5:4
3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. 4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love	2:29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him. 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. 2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. 3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure. 4 Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our	4:19 We love him, because he first loved us. 20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. 5:1 Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that

The Third Panel, 4:7-5:12

<p>of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. 6 He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.</p>	<p>sins; and in him is no sin. 6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. 7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. 10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.</p>	<p>loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him. 2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. 3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. 4 For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.</p>
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Second Reference to the Three Witnesses in 5:6

The second reference to water and blood differs in two ways from the first. These are explained in various ways by different commentators.

1. The preposition translated “by” is different. In the first, it is properly “through.” In the second it is “in.” But the interchangeability of the pronouns is often noted, and I don’t discern any clear difference between them in this context.

2. In the second, the article (“the”) accompanies each noun. I take these as being simply articles of previous reference, the specific water (namely, the Lord’s baptism) and the specific blood (namely, his death) referred to in the first reference to water and blood.

Tabular Comparison of the Belief Sections

2:18-28	4:1-6	5:5-12
<p>18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us. 20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things. 21 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth. 22 Who is a liar but he</p>	<p>1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the</p>	<p>5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? 6 This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7 For there are three that bear record, in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. 8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one. 9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater:</p>

<p>that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. 23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also. 24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. 25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life. 26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you. 27 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him. 28 And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.</p>	<p>world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.</p>	<p>for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son. 10 He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. 11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.</p>
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The Life-Giving Son of God in the OT

Where does God bear witness that “this life is in his Son” (5:11)? I suggest that this witness is in the servant songs of Isaiah, culminating in Isa 52-53, based on the LXX rendering of עבד (יהוה) in the book.

עבד appears 40x in Isaiah. The two dominant translations are παῖς (20x), and δοῦλος and its cognate δουλόω (10x), and παῖς is the one preferred for the descriptions of “my servant,” including 52:13. (The other word family appears in servant songs only in 42:19 (where LXX reads a plural; the singular is rendered παῖς earlier in the verse) and most prominently 49:3-5 (where παῖς appears in the commission in v. 6).

Table 19 shows the translation preferences throughout the entire OT. There, παῖς and δοῦλος with its cognates are evenly balanced. Isaiah’s preference is distinctive.

	παῖς	δοῦλ*	οἰκέτης	θεράπ*	λατρεύω		Total
עבד n	337	337	35	47	1		803
עבד v	7	133	1	2	76		289
Total	460	614	52	102	97		

Table 19: LXX vocabulary for “servant” in the entire MT

παῖς means first of all a young child, then one’s own offspring (“son”), and then a servant. The early believers used it to refer to our Lord:

Act 4:27 For of a truth against thy holy **child** Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, 28 For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.

In John 4:51, the word describes a person who is called a son υἱός in vv. 46, 47, 50. They would naturally have understood Isaiah 53 from the LXX as referring to God's obedient child, bringing eternal life to his people.

Our Lord's position as the exalted Son of God is most in focus after his resurrection. During his years of humiliation, he was reluctant to offer this title directly, though his words and actions implied this relation to his Father. Like the name "Jesus" without title, παῖς is appropriate to this period, which is the focus of the servant songs. Now that he is exalted, we rejoice in the full glory of his title, "Son."

LXX renders עֶבֶד as υἱός once, in Deut 32:43 "he will avenge the blood of his servants/sons".

The Condition of Eternal Life: Believing or Having? (5:12)

We are accustomed to the formula, common in John, "whoever believes, will have eternal life":

John 3:15 That whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but **have eternal life**. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever **believeth** in him should not perish, but have **everlasting life**.

John 3:36 He that **believeth** on the Son hath **everlasting life**: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

John 5:24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth** on him that sent me, hath **everlasting life**, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

John 6:40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth** on him, may have **everlasting life**: and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth** on me hath **everlasting life**.

John 20:31 But these are written, that ye might **believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have **life** through his name.

1John 5:13 These things have I written unto you that **believe** on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

1Tim. 1:16 Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter **believe** on him to **life everlasting**.

Note in particular the contrast in 3:36, and compare it with 5:12. What does it mean to "have the Son" as opposed to "believe on the Son"?

The answer probably lies in the emphasis on abiding throughout the epistle. Note the link between belief and abiding:

1Jn 4:15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.